SEALED WITH A KISS: Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto surprises sister-in-law Lipa Mayor Vilma on Wednesday as he gives way to her bid for governor. *(Story on Page A19).* EDWIN BACASMAS

METRO / A24

LRT takes Lenten break April 5-9; MRT, April 5-8

ACROSS / A18

Recovery of oil from Solar I shows 2M liters spilled off Guimaras

WORLD / A25

Use of stent in heart patients does not reduce mortality, study finds

NEWS / A2

US offers $5M reward for RP-based Malaysian terrorist suspect

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Thursday, March 29, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 111 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

It's official: Garci running for Congress, Palparan too

By Grace Cantal-Albasin
Inquirer Mindanao

MALAYBALAY CITY—IT'S OFFICIAL.

Former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, who figured in the "Hello Garci" scandal that nearly toppled the Arroyo administration, is running for congressman in the first district of Bukidnon.

IT'S OFFICIAL/ A10

"I LOVE THESE KIDS," Armando Ducat Jr. says of the 26 kindergarten-age children whom he invited for a field trip to Tagaytay but later held hostage for over 10 hours. The kids are from the Ducat-owned Musmos Day Care Center in Baseco Compound, Tondo. Ducat said the hostage-taking was for his hostages' benefit so "they can have continued education up to college." RYAN LIM

World watched drama

Hostage-taker hits RP poverty, corruption

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Cenon Bibe

FOR 10 TENSE HOURS YESterday, the Philippines was put on unprecedented spotlight as a man with a penchant for publicity stunts railed against poverty and corruption, embarrassing President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

Armando Ducat, owner of a day care center from where he seized 26 children and four teachers and held them hostage inside a bus, captured headlines in newspapers around the world and topped newscasts in global television networks and websites on cyberspace.

YouTube, the Arabic TV station Al-Jazeera along with BBC and CNN carried scenes of laughing children un-

WORLD/ A12

SURRENDERS TO CHAVIT: Senatorial candidate Chavit Singson holds on to 2 live grenades from hostage-taker Armando "Jun" Ducat and his aide Cesar Carbonell and puts back the firing pins to end the 10-hour standoff. RANDY HORMILLOSA

Two men free 26 kids after 10-hr standoff

By Volt Contreras, Tina G. Santos and Alcuin Papa

"LET THE CANDLES BE A WARNING. If the promises remain unfulfilled, you will see those candles again."

With these words, Armando "Jun" Ducat put the pin back in the grenade, handed it over to Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, and surrendered.

Having gotten his wish for a candlelight vigil against corruption, Ducat gave up, leaving the nation wondering whether it had found a new hero or simply saw a dangerous political stunt.

The hostage drama near the Manila City Hall, which began at 9:30 a.m. yesterday and gripped the country until sundown, was over.

Ducat, a 56-year-old civil engineer, freed a busload of children and teachers

TWO MEN/ A13

REUTERS

CHILD WITH A FEVER is free in the arms of Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. four hours into the unfolding drama. A longtime family friend of Ducat, Revilla was the first to enter the bus and start the negotiations with a happy ending.

'Sir Ducat' gave toys, kids thought it was a game

By Allison W. Lopez and Tarra Quismundo

HE EVEN GAVE THEM TOYS AND IT made them think it was all a game.

Little did the 26 children realize that they had been caught in an emotionally explosive drama that was to grip the nation, including Malacañang Palace, for 10 hours.

"They thought it was a game because the hostage-taker gave them toys. Not until he showed a pistol did they get scared," said Dr. Mary Caroline Azores, the in-house psychiatrist at the Ospital ng Maynila where the children and their four teachers were brought after their hostage-taker, Armando "Jun" Ducat, surrendered and freed them.

"They were not that afraid initially because they were familiar with the hostage-taker and he gave them toys. What made them scared was when they saw guns," Azores said in a press briefing last night.

Crying from fear, one of the children, a 7-year-old boy, still managed to utter kind words about Ducat.

The boy, a Kinder 1 student at the

SIR DUCAT/ A10

Bayan Muna tells GMA: You made us No. 1

By Leila B. Salaverria and Christian V. Esguerra

THE MILITANT BAYAN MUNA HAS THE Arroyo administration to thank for its No. 1 standing in the Social Weather Stations' latest nationwide survey on the party-list race, according to Teodoro Casiño, one of its representatives in the House.

Casiño yesterday said the administration's continued persecution of another

BAYAN MUNA/ A20

ANO YAN... GANTI—GANTIHAN?

After 'barrel man,' Baguio bares 'barrel Barbie'

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—SOUVENIR TRADERS are bent on proving that what's sauce for the gander is also sauce for the goose.

Thus, Baguio's iconic souvenir item, the "barrel man"—a tabletop wooden sculpture of a man in a barrel which, when lifted, triggers a spring that releases a penis—now has a "mate."

The "barrel woman"—or, as some teenagers call it, the "barrel Barbie"—is

AFTER/ A20

Alston report to UN slams AFP, Palace for killings

By Christian V. Esguerra and Norman Bordadora

SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR PHILIP ALSTON has formally presented to the United Nations his initial findings on the spate of extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, warning of "dire consequences" if the matter remained unresolved.

In a six-page preliminary report dated March 22, he criticized key government institutions, particularly the executive branch and the military, for their apparent failure to address the killings.

Alston presented a report on Tuesday at the fourth session of the UN Human Rights Council being held in Geneva, Switzerland, from March 12 until tomorrow.

In his interim report at the United Nations, he criticized the Malacañang policy requiring government officials, including military officers, to get approval from President Macapagal-Arroyo before they can show up in congressional inquiries.

On a number of occasions, officials snubbed congressional hearings.

"The executive branch has stymied the legislature's efforts to oversee the execution of laws," he said. "This restrictive approach tends to make congressional

ALSTON/ A20

Ducat: Not your typical hostage-taker

By Volt Contreras

CITIZEN DUCAT CERTAINLY KNOWS HIS audience.

The man who yesterday threatened to set off a grenade on a bus full of children and ranted a litany of sociopolitical grievances before a shocked nation seemed to have broken all known stereotypes of a hostage-taker.

Engineer Armando Ducat Jr. has been driven to such extreme measures twice before and the drama he started near the Manila City Hall yesterday could already be considered Act III.

"Jun" Ducat also held hostage two priests in Sta. Cruz, Manila, over a building contract dispute in 1989.

Six years later, he climbed to the top of the 18-meter Mabuhay Rotonda between Manila and Quezon City for a hunger strike, urging voters to reject candidates of Chinese ancestry.

Ducat then was reported to be the founding chair of a group called Kadugong Liping Pilipino (Kalipi).

DUCAT/ A12

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

SOURCE: PAGASA

Valentine's Day detonators on display

SINGAPORE—AN ANTHRAX-laden letter written to former US Senator Tom Daschle and detonators used in the 2005 Valentine's Day bombings in the Philippines were among items on display as Singapore opened the doors to its rarely viewed anti-terrorism academy Wednesday.

More than two dozen security consultants from around the world toured the Home Team Academy, and caught a glimpse of the city-state's preparations to thwart terrorism.

"After 9/11, we have had a lot of operations involving multi-agency collaboration," said Home Team Academy training command chief Dominic Baptist.

"We're training all on the front lines on what to look out for," Baptist said, referring to immigration, police, firefighters and customs officials.

It also features a "Global Terrorism Suite," where officers are put through a video from Britain's Metropolitan Police, and trained to recognize smells from various chemical agents.

Among the simulated items on display:

- A copy of the anthrax-filled letter addressed to former Senate majority leader Tom Daschle.
- Detonators, devices and explosives used in one of three deadly Valentine's Day bombings in the Philippines in 2005, and by British shoe bomber Richard Reid.

AP

US offers $5M for terror suspect in RP bombings

THE UNITED STATES HAS OFfered a $5 million reward for information leading to the capture of a US-trained Malaysian engineer accused of involvement in a series of deadly bombings in the Philippines where he is believed to be living.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice approved the bounty for Zulkifli bin Hir, 40, who goes by the alias "Marwan" and is believed to be a senior leader in several Southeast Asian terrorist groups tied to the al-Qaida international terror organization, the State Department said in statement yesterday.

Bin Hir is thought to run the Kumpulun Mujahidin Malaysia (KMM) organization and be a member of the central command of Jemaah Islamiyah, the al-Qaida affiliate blamed for numerous attacks including the 2002 Bali nightclub bombings in Indonesia, it said.

The US State Department said Bin Hir is believed to have been living in the Philippines since August 2003 is also thought to have conducted explosives training for the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf group.

Bin Hir has long been sought by Philippine authorities and last August, two Filipino police officers were killed in a clash while trying to approach his suspected hideout near Manila, according to the State Department.

According to counter-terrorism reports, Bin Hir, born in 1966 in Muar, Johor, Malaysia, also goes by the alias Musa Abdul.

His younger brother, Taufik bin Abdul Halim, aka Dany, is now jailed in Indonesia for involvement in the 2001 bombing of Jakarta Atrium Mall, the statement said.

The Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah groups have been blamed for the worst terrorist attacks in the Philippines, including the bombing of a ferry off Manila Bay in 2004 which killed more than 200 people. The latter is considered he second-worst terrorist attack in Southeast Asia after the 2002 Bali bombings.

Rice authorized the reward under the "Rewards for Justice" program, which is run by the State Department and seeks information leading to the capture of wanted terrorists.

Since its creation in 1984, the program has paid more than $62 million to more than 40 people who have helped capture terror suspects, including informants in the Philippines that have received at least $1.6 million in reward money. All individuals providing information are assured that their identity will remain strictly confidential. *Cynthia D. Balana*

Blast survivor's revenge: Peace

JOLO, SULU—HE LOST A LEFT EAR, HIS hands were burned, and the huge scars in the face and arms reminded him of the deadly bomb attack staged by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits on a cooperative last year.

Yet Oscar Santillanosa, a survivor of the May 27, 2006 bombing of the Sulu Multi-Purspose Cooperative, said on Monday the fateful incident inspired him to work hard for peace. Two employees and three others were killed and more than 20 people were wounded in the attack.

"The only hope to survive is to fight back through peace, and our peace campaign yielded positive response because by next month, our shop will be opening again. It means job and food for my family," Santillanosa said in Filipino.

"Now we are starting anew," said Lucena Bacalso, chair of the cooperative. "It may be a difficult journey but it lessens the burden because of the overwhelming help."

Some P3 million in funds to rebuild the cooperative came from Armando de Rossi, an Italian-American philanthropist and president of the 3P Foundation (Peace Progress and Prosperity), through the support of some American citizens.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, US forces, and the provincial and municipal governments offered free labor and food.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie Kenney said everything materialized due to the close partnership of different sectors and organizations "that gave us labor and resources free of cost."

The rebuilding of the cooperative and its possible opening in June is "hugely significant for the people of Jolo. With the help from friends, locals and overseas, we are going to win against terror," Kenney said, adding:

"It's a turning moment for the people of Jolo." *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

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MANGOES FOR EXPORT. President Macapagal Arroyo and United States Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney inspect crates of green mangoes from Zambales to be exported to the United States at a mango processing and packing plant in Taguig City. At left is Roberto Amores, president of the Hi-Las Marketing Corp. Due to the infestation of certain pests in other mango-growing islands in the country, only mangoes from Guimaras were allowed to be exported to the US mainland. In December, the US allowed Philippine mangoes, except those grown in Palawan, entry to Hawaii and Guam. LYN RILLON

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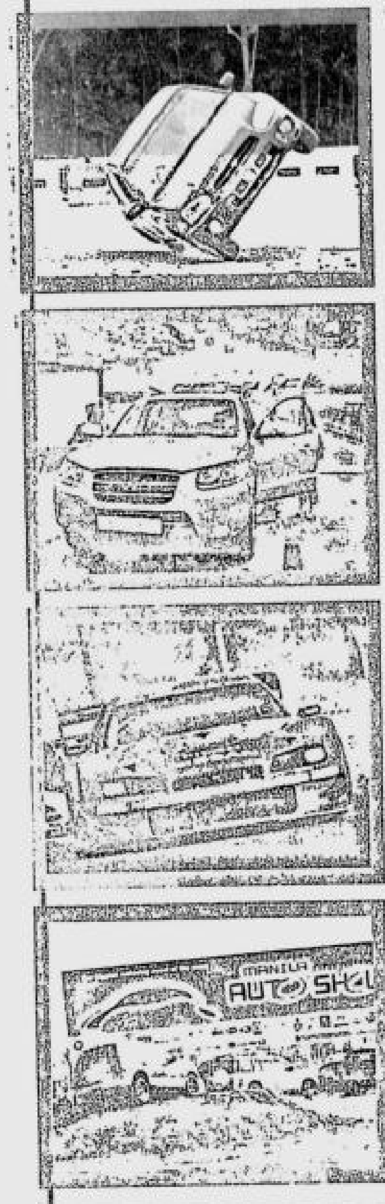

Let's GO Genuine Opposition

FREEDOM OF SPEECH
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WHEREAS, reminiscent of the Martial Law era, there has been a surge of libel cases filed against media reporters, broadcasters and journalists who have provided the public with fair and accurate accounts of lying, cheating and stealing in the government by public officials and/or their conduits;

WHEREAS, there is a growing threat that disclosure of and debate on matters of public interest, particularly on how public funds are used, would be curtailed thereby; and

WHEREAS, there is a creeping atmosphere that instills fear in the hearts and minds of media practitioners preventing them from reporting corruption in the government, lest they suffer arrest and incarceration, if not the all-too-prevalent summary execution.

NOW THEREFORE, in order to give life to the Constitutional policy of full public disclosure of all the government's transactions involving public interest and, for the purpose, to zealously protect the freedom of the press:

BE IT RESOLVED, as it is hereby resolved that the undersigned candidates for the position of Senator in the May 14, 2007 national election commit to amend the law on libel in order that it can no longer be utilized for the perverse objective of concealing corruption from the people and as a refuge for corrupt officials to escape public accountability.

Adopted. March 12,2007

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Agri chief sees bright future for RP mangoes

By TJ Burgonio

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE SEES brighter prospects for the country's mango industry this year after the United States cleared the way for the import of mangoes grown anywhere in the Philippines to Guam and Hawaii.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap yesterday predicted that the country's export of mangoes to the US would increase to 250 metric tons this year from a mere 56.3 metric tons last year as an offshoot of the clearance from Washington, D.C.

"This new rule by the United States is a big boost for our mango industry considering that we can now capture a much larger share of the American market, which has a very high demand for mangoes," he said in a statement.

The US Federal Register published on Dec. 18 last year a final rule on the importation of Philippine mangoes to Hawaii and Guam allowing the export of the tropical fruit grown anywhere in the country, except Palawan.

Before, the country was only exporting mangoes grown in Guimaras to the US mainland.

Under the new rule, mangoes originating from approved areas in the country should be accompanied by a Department of Agriculture sanitary clearance certifying that the fruits have been treated for fruit flies of the genus Bactrocera. Mangoes from Guimaras must also carry a declaration that these were grown in the island.

Yesterday morning, President Macapagal-Arroyo and US Ambassador Kristie Kenney, together with Yap, led the ceremonial send-off of 25 metric tons of mangoes to Guam and Hawaii at the FTI complex in Taguig.

Yap said that the US, home to 2.8 million Filipino-Americans, was a potentially large market for Philippine mangoes.

Mango consumption in the US was estimated at 2.01 lb per person in 2004. It is estimated that the Philippines could boost its exports to 39.3 metric tons a year in Guam, and 191.8 metric tons in Hawaii, according to him.

In 2006, the US imported only 56.3 metric tons of Philippine mangoes, way lower than its import of 157.8 metric tons in 2005, and 91.9 metric tons in 2002, the year Manila started exporting the tropical fruit in the US market.

To help them penetrate the US market, the agriculture department has been helping Filipino mango exporters shoulder costs for the inspection procedures required by US authorities.

In 2002, the department shelled out $17,000 as its share in the inspection costs.

The mango industry contributes an average of P14.9 billion a year to the agriculture sector. The Philippine mango ranks third as the most important fruit in the country in terms of volume of production and area after banana and pineapple.

The country is the sixth largest exporter of fresh mangoes to the US.

Naia to expand old terminals next month

IN THE MEANTIME THAT THE CONTROVERSIAL Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport is kept non-operational because of legal and structural problems, airport authorities said the Naia's two other terminals would be expanded to deal with an expected rise in passenger traffic this year.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), said expansion work on Terminals 1 and 2 would start next month because of the delay in the opening of the mothballed Terminal 3.

"The volume of passengers at capacity in the international terminals is 8.5 million per year, we are already hitting 9.5 million and we are projecting a continuous increase of tourists. So we are doing administrative work while we are embroiled in this situation," he added.

Naia 3 was set for a "rolling opening" this month but even this partial operation had to be deferred after two engineering consultants found structural flaws that they said could pose "life safety risks" to airport workers and users once the terminal was opened.

TCGI Engineers and the Ove Arup & Partners HK, the consultants hired by the Miaa to check the facility's structural integrity following the collapse of a portion of the terminal's ceiling last year, also recommended that more repairs be done inside the facility.

Legal issues

While these repairs are being done and the resolution of legal issues surrounding Naia 3 remain unresolved, Cusi said the two existing terminals would be renovated.

The expansion work will include refurbishing queuing areas at the curbside of Terminal 1's arrival and departure areas for the comfort of waiting passengers.

The Miaa's engineering and operations people are also looking at other sections of the terminal that can be repaired without hampering the airport's daily operations.

"We are studying improvement areas ... the repairs might begin next month," Cusi said.

The Centennial Terminal, or Terminal 2, which handles roughly 2.5 million passengers a month, will also be expanded and reconfigured to improve traffic flow, and its arrival and departure halls renovated to accommodate more passengers.

Repairs at the terminal are planned to be finished by December, a peak month for passenger movement at the airport.

The Miaa has also installed four new X-ray machines at the two terminals.

Scheduled for delivery soon are seven walk-through metal detectors with "high sensitivity equipment with accurate metal locators [that] would speed up search operation," said airport security chief Angel Atutubo.

Cusi said the government was also considering undertaking the repairs at Terminal 3 using a different contractor and shouldering the cost if necessary.

He said the facility's Japanese contractor, Takenaka Corp., had refused its request to carry out remedial work at the terminal.

We the victims

He said that in its reply to the Miaa's March 15 letter, Takenaka refused to accept responsibility for the structural flaws in the building and passed the blame on to the designer and the building's owner.

"But we're still discussing the options. What we're doing is we're finding, trying to find ways to expedite the repairs," said Cusi.

"What we don't want is to be stuck in arguments ... Maybe we can set aside arguments and Miaa can [attend] to the remedies ... because the victim here is us, the people," he said.

Takenaka was contracted by the Naia 3's builder, the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco), to construct the multimillion-dollar facility.

Piatco, a consortium that includes the German-based Fraport, however, lost possession of the terminal after the government and the Supreme Court voided its contract for being attended by fraud and graft.

The government took over Naia 3 after it made a partial payment of P3.2 billion to Piatco for the cost of construction.

Piatco is claiming that the cost of construction was $500 million while the government placed the tag price at only $320 million. The courts still have to resolve the dispute. *Tarra Quismundo*

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 28 issue, a front-page story—"Technology shaking media but papers still in pretty good shape"—stated that Inquirer.net receives 40,000 hits per day. The number of hits is generally not considered a reliable measure of visitor traffic. The article should have stated that Inquirer.net gets over 700,000 page views a day, and three to five million unique visitors each month.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, the editorial—"Spotlight"—on Page A12 of the Opinion section misspelled the surname of one of the prominent members of the Russell Tribunal in 1966. One of the leftists in the tribunal that investigated US war crimes in Vietnam was Simone de Beauvoir—not Bevoir.

Candidate priest faces suspension

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THERE IS NOTHING TO stop a priest from running for public office but he is bound to face some problems whether he wins or loses.

For one, canon law requires that he be suspended from the priesthood, according to Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

The question arose after Fr. Eddie Panlilio, director of the Social Action Center in the archdiocese of Pampanga, announced plans to run for Pampanga governor, a decision that Cruz said was reached after "consultations with lay leaders and members of the clergy."

"The Church has a very clear provision saying that clerics are not allowed to hold any office in government, whether elective or appointive, that shares in the exercise of civil power or authority," Cruz said.

"A priest has enough to do for the rest of his life and his primordial calling is to attend to the socio-moral welfare of the people," he said.

Panlilio, 53, has presented himself as an "alternative moral choice" to reelectionist Gov. Mark Lapid and provincial board member Lilia Pineda in the May 14 elections.

If he does win, Panlilio may be surprised to find out "how secular government is run," said Cruz.

It's not impossible that he would find himself facing many difficulties should he decide "to put order, integrity and honesty in the political governance," he said.

But it's also possible he would learn the ropes of good governance, he added.

Cruz said Panlilio may find himself out of job if he loses as he may not rejoin the priesthood. While he may be reinstated as a priest, "it's in bad taste for him to seek reinstatement," he said.

Many priests have run for public office in the past, and none of them were reinstated, the bishop said.

"He should have the honor and righteousness and *delicadeza* and he should not seek reinstatement if defeated," Cruz said.

He said Panlilio has already been issued a decree of suspension and cannot engage in such priestly functions as saying mass and hearing confessions.

Panlilio said he was "heeding the clamor of the laity to serve God's people by running for public office."

"An extraordinary situation like that in Pampanga requires a radical option," he said.

According to Cruz, Panlilio decided to run as the choice left to Pampanga residents was between "one reportedly identified with jueteng and another allegedly involved in a quarrying scam."

"While there are other candidates, there are also questions about their persons and value systems. So to fill up the vacuum among choices for governor, Panlilio, who is in charge of social action which has much to do with socio-moral work, decided to run," Cruz said.

But he cautioned that Panlilio might end up dividing the people of Pampanga.

"After the elections, will there still be one Catholic Church in Pampanga?" he asked.

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Girls outdo boys in HS career tests

GIRLS DID RELATIVELY BETTER THAN BOYS in the first-ever National Career Assessment Examination (NCAE) given by the education department to help high school graduates decide what courses to pursue when they get to college.

Females made up more than half of the 1,305,211 public and private high school seniors who took the test last Jan. 17. There were 704,292 female examinees against 592,941 males.

Another 77,978 examinees didn't specify their gender, said Nelia Benito, director of the National Education Testing and Research Center (NETRC) which conducted the nationwide exams.

Career decisions

The NCAE, which was adapted from the defunct National College Entrance Examination (NCEE), measures technical-vocational and entrepreneurial aptitude aside from scholastic ability. The exam is mandatory but not yet a requirement for admission to college.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus has explained that the exam would address the so-called "job-skills mismatch," that is, the kind of graduates that the tertiary schools turn out do not match the requirements of industry.

Equal footing

Three of the five top placers were girls. But Benito stressed that "five examinees, not just one" topped the NCAE this year.

"With similar scores of 99-plus percent, they are on equal footing," she said.

They were Mary Kristine Quicho of Jose Rizal Institute, Orion, Bataan; Francis Ramon Torres of the Theresian School, Bacoor, Cavite; Hermelina Florida, Digos City National High School, Davao del Norte; Renz Jader, Ateneo de Manila University, Quezon City; and Charyljoy Navarez, San Nicolas Academy, Mainit, Surigao del Norte.

According to an NETRC report, the girl takers excelled in all three subtests—general scholastic aptitude (GSA), technical-vocational aptitude (TVA) and entrepreneurial skills (ES).

The girls scored 53.94 percent in GSA, against the boys' 50.68 percent, 79.53 percent in TVA against the boys' 79.07 percent and 81.37 percent in ES, to the boys' 78.1 percent.

The NCAE aims to "assess abilities of students in areas essential for post-secondary careers and provide students information that will help them make wise career decisions."

According to Lapus, the exam was "by far the best tool our young graduates can use to properly assess their own skills and inclinations. And this will enable them to make more effective career decisions."

Lapus urged parents as well as tertiary schools to be "guided by NCAE scores so that our education system can become more rational and deliberate."

"There is a need to change the bias of most Filipinos in favor of college education. Tech-voc education offers students a wide range of career opportunities similar to those who graduate from four-year college degrees," he said.

Top schools

The "top performing schools" (those with more than 400 examinees) were Taal National High School in Taal, Batangas, Ateneo de Manila University and Dolores National High School in Eastern Samar, according to Lapus.

Batangas topped all school divisions nationwide in the three subtests, said the NETRC report.

Test results also showed that 22,267 students belonging to low-income families were among the top performers in the General Scholastic Aptitude (GSA) subtest "with very high to excellent scores (98 to 99-plus percent)."

More than 33,444 poor students also received very high scores in the TVA segment.

Lapus said earlier that the NCAE results validated the education department's decision to put a stress on technical-vocational programs.

He said the results showed a total of 711,526, or 54.5 percent of test-takers, had a high aptitude for technical-vocational programs while 468,901 (35.9 percent) had moderate aptitude for TVA.

Only 49,066 students had high aptitude for college, he said. *Jerry Esplanada*

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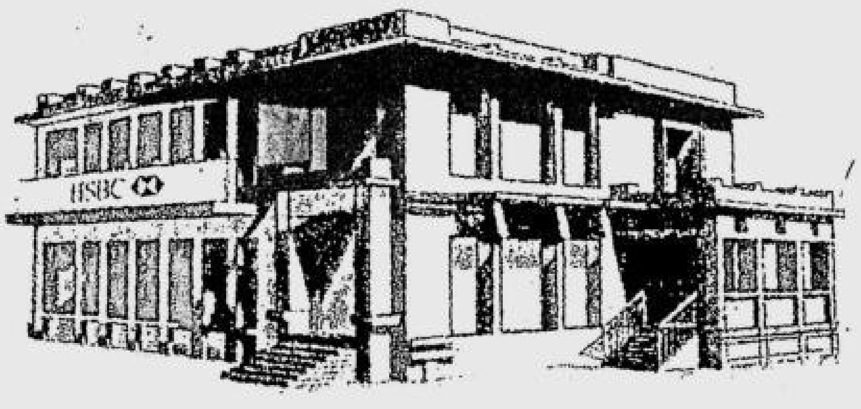

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2007 Annual Sales Awards

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Message of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

Warmest greetings to the officers and staff of the Fortune Medicare, Inc. on your *Awards Night* in honor of your top sales associates.

I commend you and your awardees for your tremendous efforts to extend healthcare coverage to the Filipino wage earners, particularly the teachers, government employees and other ordinary workers who make up the bulk of your enrolled members.

The health maintenance organization (HMO) industry of which you are one of the pioneers, has been a component of the health care delivery system for more than three decades now. Today it is a dynamic partner of government in ensuring that our countrymen are provided with adequate and affordable health care.

May your work continue to bring assurance to our people that adequate medical services will always be available to them at the hour of need through affordable HMO programs such as that provided by FortuneCare.

Congratulations to the awardees and more power to FortuneCare. *Mabuhay!*

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Message of the President of Fortune Medicare, Inc.

I congratulate the awardees of FortuneCare on their Annual Awards Night! Warmest greetings, too, to the board of directors, officers and staff and the entire FortuneCare sales force.

Once again, you have succeeded in overcoming obstacles that others see as a barrier for achieving their goals, giving us pride anew in having lived up to our corporate mission of making comprehensive healthcare services available and affordable to all Filipinos.

Your achievement contributed greatly to the company's excellent sales performance in 2006, enabling FortuneCare to sustain its position as a top player in the HMO industry.

With your determination and hard work, you generate optimism among stakeholders of the company that we will attain the very ambitious goals we have set for 2007.

Keep up the good work. May your sales performance continue to soar and your career be more rewarding over the coming years.

J. ANTONIO A. CABANGON, JR.

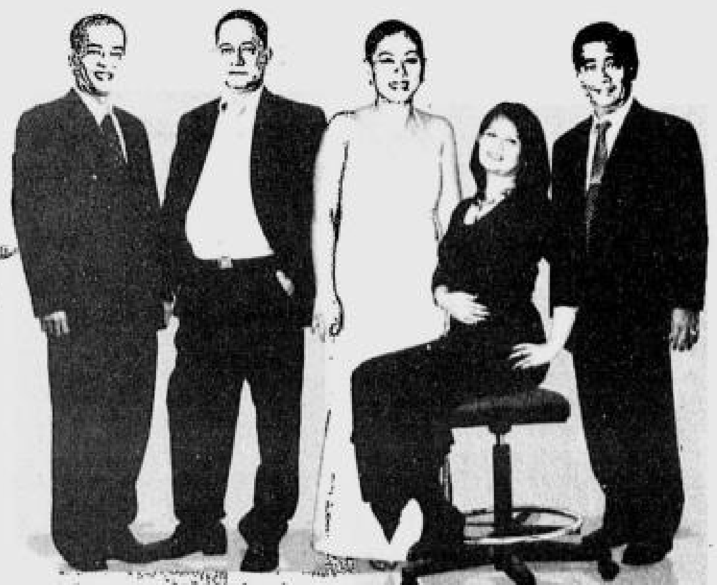
Account Executives

- 1st Place **Florita Sevillana** (PALAWAN) standing center
- 2nd Place **Angelito Vidas** (ANGELES) standing center
- 3rd Place **Napoleon Jaranilla** (RGB) seated center
- 4th Place **Erlinda Alferez** (RBC) seated center
- 5th Place **Guisela Jardin** (LGRA) 5th left
- 6th Place **Annabelle Sarmiento** (RGB) 4th right
- 7th Place **Renel Raymund Joseph Riola** (LGI) 4th left
- 8th Place **Arnel Bondoc** (PALAWAN) 1st right
- 9th Place **Lucina Lapastora** (LOS BAÑOS) 2nd left
- 10th Place **Ronald Tolentino** (RGB) 1st left
- 11th Place **Ranilo Duque** (TARLAC) 3rd left
- 12th Place **Carmelita Velarde** (RGB) 2nd right
- 13th Place **Arlene Reyes** (RGB) 3rd right
- 14th Place **Apollo Ebora** (WAGA) 5th right
- 15th Place **Hernani Doromal** (ILOILO) without picture

Agency Managers

From left to right
- 1st Place **Ana Marie Borbe** (RGB)
- 2nd Place **Luisito Velarde** (RGB)
- 3rd Place **Wilma Vidas** (ANGELES)
- 4th Place **Tranquilino Daigdigan** (LGRA)
- 5th Place **Isabelita Albarracin** (WAGA)

QUALIFIERS :
- 6th Place **Rowena Aboguin** w/o picture (BSA)
- 7th Place **Solidad Cruz** (RBC)
- 8th Place **Aveleth Tabudlo** (WAGA)



General Agency Managers

- 1st Place **Jonathan Borbe** (RGB) Left
- 2nd Place **Leo Regaliza** (LGRA) 2nd from left
- 3rd Place **Wilfred Albarracin** Right
- 4th Place **Chat Abello** (ILOILO) Center
- 5th Place **Raquel Macabeo** (BSA) Seated

Account Executives Qualifiers

Cesar Banan (LGRA)
Rowena Calaguas (BSA)
Renell Lopez (TWA)
Nerissa Velarde (RGB)
Rosalia Ismael (CDO)
Arlene Cabarroguis (WAGA)
Romel Torno (BSA)
Nancy Sanchez (RGB)
Joanne Kristine Alcasid (NLJA)
Anna Leah Regaliza (LGRA)
Miguel Caabas (PALAWAN)
Ma. Victoria Albarracin (WAGA)
Edna Cervantes (LGRA)
Herminia Medina (RGB)
Erlinda Lazarraga (DAVAO)
Belen Juan (RBC)
Cynthia Lapastora (Los Baños)
Wilfredo Bermas (BSA)
Josephine Perez (CABANATUAN)
Anabela Fabian (AA)
Manuel Padilla (RGB)
Anna Christine Stuart (Los Baños)
Grace Marie Reyes (Angeles)
Ambrosio Enario (Cebu)
Clayton Maro (Cebu)
Jean Escultura (RGB)
Nemesio Oliverio, Jr. (Iloilo)
Remus Manjares (RCA)
Milagros Javier (LGRA)
Janet Almazan (AA)
Maria Louella Henson (RGB)
Maridel Ylagan (TGA)
Rechie Rosell (BSA)
Amelita Adizas (Angeles)
Mercedes Santos (PGA)
Jose Ibea (RGB)
Rosa Alberto (RGB)
Jose Tamboong (LGRA)
Jerry Jon Borbe (RGB)
Ma. Marcinette Aribon (RGB)
Estela May Raboy (Palawan)
Fernando Agtarap (RGB)
Rodolfo de Leon (FCD III)
Leonardo Lapinid (Cebu)
Alma Cruz (LGRA)
Mary Claire Monta (RGB)
Mylene Talabis (RGB)
Cielo M. Santiago (LGRA)

Without Pictures

- Nelly Solina (PALAWAN)
- Paz Roxanne Cheng (DAVAO)
- Ma. Concepcion Mateo (Cabanatuan)
- Jeska Vanessa Tipace (Angeles)
- Ellen Alferez (Davao)
- Petronilio Javaluyas (WAGA)
- Analy Andamon (Davao)
- Rebecca Viray (Angeles)

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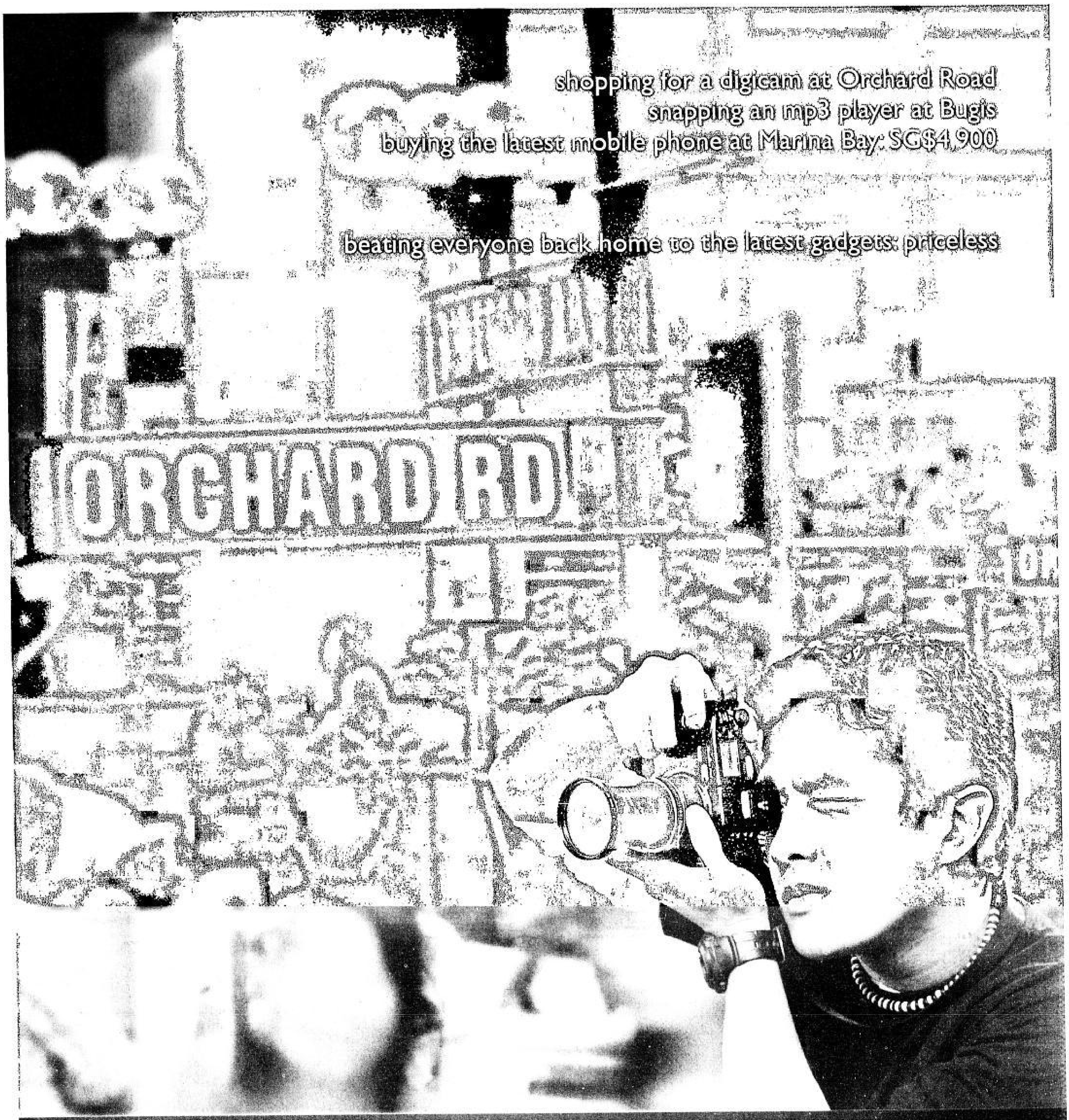
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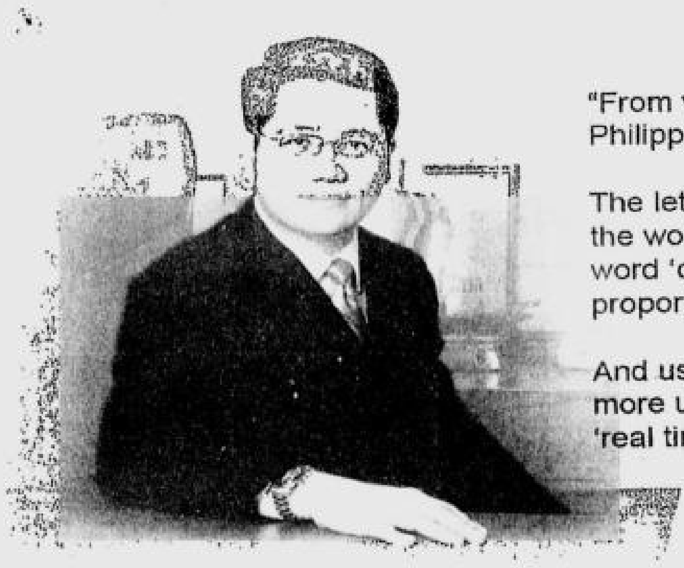

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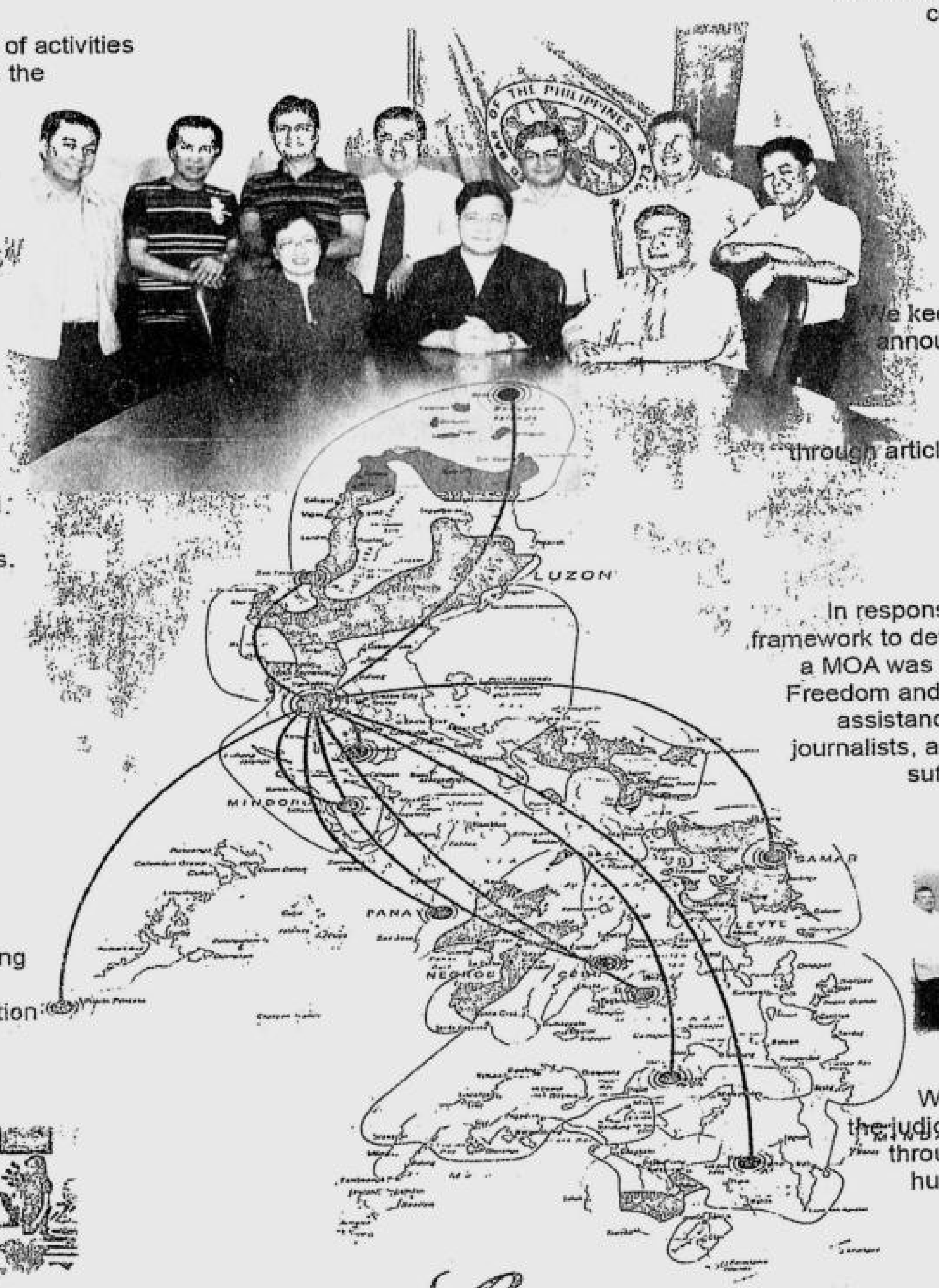
HON. JOSE VICENTE B. SALAZAR
National President
Integrated Bar of the Philippines

A Message From The 17th Board of Governors



ENERGY
We maintained an extensive calendar of activities with various IBP chapters from across the archipelago, where each interaction provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen our ties, exchange ideas, offer solutions to the pressing challenges that we face as an organization and expand our network of participation.

ENVIRONMENT protection
Through the IBP's National Environmental Action Team, we continued to mobilize our national and international network of lawyers in a serious effort towards conducting fact-finding operations, providing legal services and pushing for stronger environmental enforcement operations.

shared ENDEAVORS
We reached out our hands in camaraderie and alliance with distinguished legal bodies and personalities from around the world, in our shared endeavors for combating corruption, abuse, ignorance and all other threats to the speedy dispensation of justice in a free world.

EMPATHY
We recognized the dedication of soldiers who are hurt or killed in battle, or are brought to court for unreasonable charges, by signing a memorandum of agreement with the Department of National Defense to provide free legal assistance to qualified members of the Armed Forces and their families.

EASE of access
Through our Public Service Portal project, we have tapped into the power of mobile communications and the internet.

EDUCATION
We keep lawyers informed of important announcements and legal updates via SMS, and provide information to students, volunteers, overseas Filipinos and the general public through articles on legal topics via our website and online journal.

ENCOURAGEMENT
In response to the call for a stronger legal framework to defend the press and its autonomy, a MOA was signed with the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility to give free legal assistance to the families of slain Filipino journalists, as well as members of media who suffer from all forms of harassment.

EMULATION
We continue to honor members of the judiciary who have shown greatness through their examples of goodness, humility, character, and dedication, serving as models to those who come after them.

leadership by EXAMPLE
With the collective leadership and example of the 17th Board of Governors, we look forward to a more connected and invigorated IBP in the years to come. One that is renewed in its shared passion and commitment to the highest standards of service to the legal community and to the Filipino people...
Through the effective harnessing of available technology...
And the more active participation of its members nationwide.

ELECTORAL involvement
More recently, the IBP partnered with civic and professional groups to create LENTE – the Legal Network for Truthful Elections – to provide free legal assistance during the canvassing of votes on the national, provincial and municipal levels in the coming May elections.

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(Governor for Western Mindanao Region)

Abelardo C. Estrada
(OIC for Northern Luzon Region)

HABHAB. Senatorial candidate Ralph Recto finishes off a serving *pansit-habhab*, a local delicacy in Lucena, Quezon, while fellow reelectionist Joker Arroyo continues attacking his share at a Team Unity sortie in Quezon, where the two administration candidates discussed with the people the future of the coconut industry.

DOH says HIV ravaging OFWs

HIV/AIDS IS RAVAGING THE LARGE OVERSEAS work force of the Philippines, posing a long-term threat to one of Manila's key sources of foreign exchange, the health department said.

Thirty-five percent of all documented cases of HIV carriers are overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), including 42 percent of the newly reported cases in 2006, according to new data.

The government estimates there were some 11,200 HIV carriers in the Philippines as of December 2005.

"It is a must that we act now because OFWs are regarded as modern-day heroes and are major contributors to the country's gross domestic product and economic stability in general," said Health Secretary Francisco Duque.

He said there were limited services to educate and support families of overseas Filipino workers who return home suffering from the virus that causes AIDS. The health department is "aggressively bridging the gap in terms of access to comprehensive HIV and AIDS services," Duque said. *AFP*

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Troops should fix, not patrol, Metro streets, Recto suggests

By Gil Cabacungan and TJ Burgonio

AMID CALLS FOR REDUCED MILITARY PRESence in Metro Manila, senatorial candidate Ralph Recto is urging the government to deploy soldiers for public work duty by undertaking road and flood control repair in the metropolis.

"There will be a lag in public works activities due to the elections. There's a 45-day ban on new construction. But repair and maintenance of existing infrastructure, such as *estero* declogging, is allowed under election laws," Recto said in a statement. "The soldiers can fill this temporary vacuum in public works construction by doing infrastructure work allowed under our laws and take advantage of the ideal weather."

The Commission on Elections' ban on public works will take effect starting today up to May 14.

The Armed Forces had fielded roughly 26 military teams composed of 260 personnel and about 5,000 reservists had been fielded to patrol and engage in anti-leftist information in Metro Manila's slum areas. Armed Forces Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon Jr. had already announced that the military would be recalled but without saying when.

Engineering duties

Recto said he was confident that local governments would welcome soldiers performing engineering duties considering that the Department of Public Works and Highways were "undermanned and ill-equipped to meet the huge backlog in infrastructure repair."

Recto noted that the military have the second biggest number of construction equipment next to the DPWH, "assets which we should occasionally tap for civilian use, given our lack of resources in this area."

"In short they need reinforcements, and our soldiers, instead of parading and marching in their camps, will do something the people want," Recto said.

Yesterday, party-list and militant groups scoffed at Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane's advice to militant groups to leave the 26 slum barangay in Metro Manila if they were wary of the troops deployed there.

'We live here'

Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano and Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Teodoro Casiño called the "advice" absurd since the mass members of the militant organizations resided in the barangays where contingents of Army soldiers had been stationed for some time now.

"That can't be done. The mass members of Bayan Muna and Anakpawis reside there. If there's anybody who should leave the barangays, it's the soldiers. They have no business being there," Mariano said in an interview.

"Suddenly, it's the visitors who are demanding the expulsion of the residents there. How moronic can you get?" Casiño rued in a statement.

Ebdane had defended the deployment of troops in 26 barangays in the metropolis as a "war for the hearts and minds of the people" and advised the militants to leave if they couldn't stand the presence of the soldiers there.

Bishop Broderick Pabillo, Manila auxiliary bishop, had expressed alarm over reports that soldiers were tailing people and asking for the identities and whereabouts of party-list group leaders in several barangays in what the militants branded as "urban militarization."

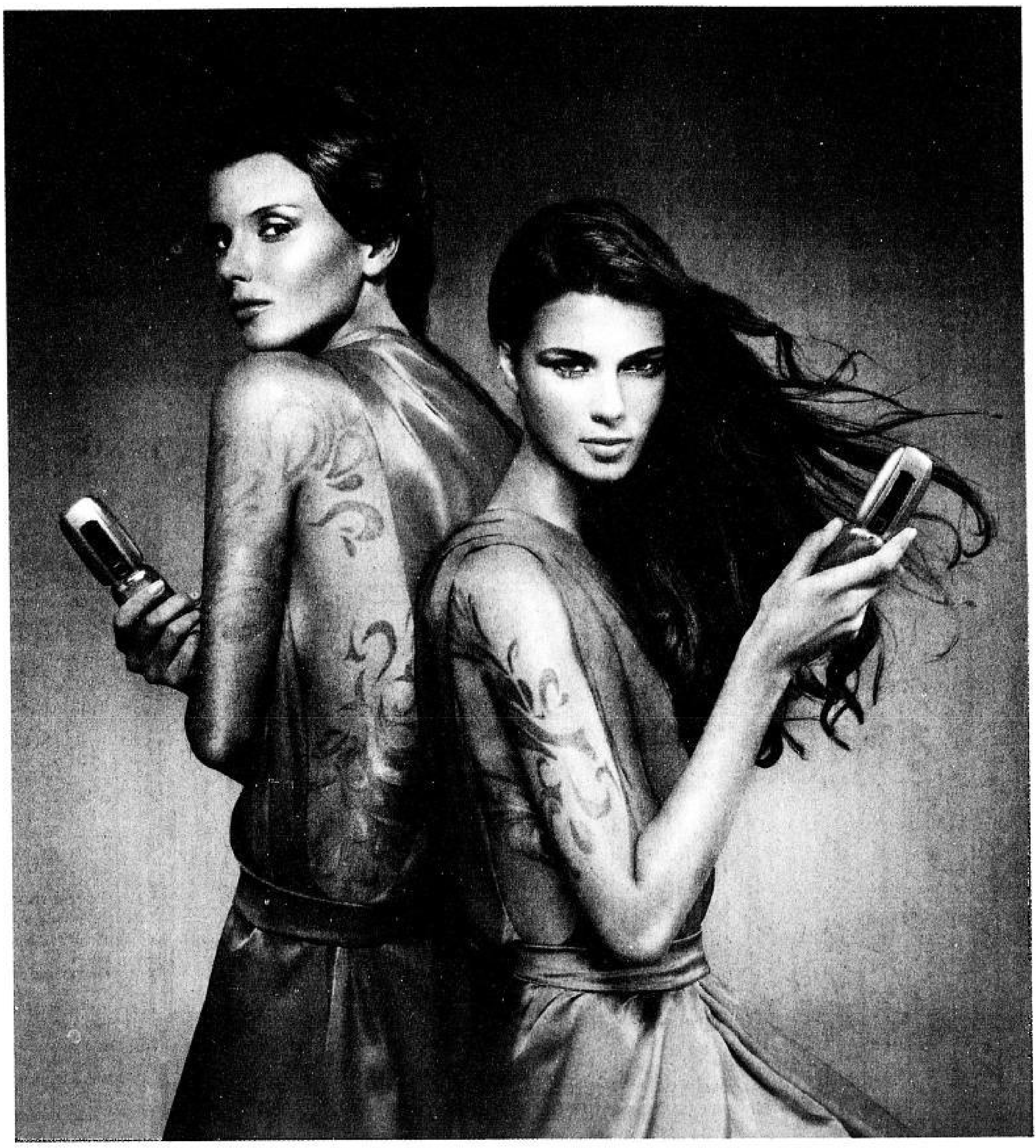
Troop pullout

Pabillo called for the pullout of the troops, a call rejected by Ebdane.

Some party-list groups, which had been branded by the government as legal fronts of the Communist Party of the Philippines, enjoy broad support in the slum areas.

Sanlakas secretary general Wilson Fortaleza said Ebdane's call to the militants "smacked of machismo" and was misplaced.

"By Ebdane's pronouncements, his tendency to shoot from the hip is funny only because he succeeded in shooting himself in the foot instead. The defense secretary's statements are wrong on all levels because of one simple truth: they live there," he said in a statement.



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Palparan seeks Congress seat under Bantay party-list group

By Nikko Dizon and Allison Lopez

BANTAY IS NOT JUST MAN'S best friend.

It's now the party-list group that has retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. as the No. 1 nominee seeking a congressional seat in the May 14 elections.

Palparan, 57, yesterday filed his certificate of acceptance as one of Bantay's four nominees at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) main office in Intramuros, Manila.

"*Kilala niyo ba si* (Do you know) Bantay? *Yung* (The) 'Bowowow'? He is man's best friend," Palparan, wearing a light gray short-sleeved *barong Tagalog*, said, teasing reporters at the Comelec.

Asked by the INQUIRER if he would also be every Filipino's best friend if Bantay won a seat in the House of Representatives?

"Yes, of course. Why not?" Palparan replied, smiling, as a supporter standing behind the general held up a banner of the party-list group that came complete with a photo of a sweet-looking puppy.

'Butcher'

Palparan has been accused of masterminding the killings of activists in the countryside, a charge that he had vehemently denied. He has been called a "*berdugo*" (butcher) by activists.

National security and the economy will be the top priorities of Palparan should Bantay win a seat in the House.

"With my entry, my focus will be on the communities that have become victims of our security problems. We have problems in economics and security. *Dahil may kaalaman ako dyan* (Because I'm knowledgeable about these areas), then I will focus on these," Palparan said.

Asked if he was referring to the victims of the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, Palparan replied in the affirmative.

"There are direct victims and consequential victims. In the communities, people cannot work because of the conflict," Palparan said.

He added that former NPA rebels were among those that Bantay wanted to help.

"They should be given help. They lack the skills and cannot find work," Palparan said.

Anticommunist, Marcos loyalist

In a way, Palparan said, Bantay could be described as an "anti-communist group."

"Communism is a nagging problem," he said.

On the Comelec's official list of accredited party-list groups joining the May 14 elections, "Bantay" is also known as the True Marcos Loyalist (for God, Country and People) Association of the Philippines, led by known Marcos supporter, Cherry Cobarrubias.

Palparan said the members of Cobarrubias' group were the same people he had met in the communities he had been assigned to when he was still on active military duty, particularly in Samar.

Palparan explained that while Cobarrubias' group was mainly supporting the late President Ferdinand Marcos, it was a marginalized group "in the sense that they (members) also come from the depressed communities."

He said that his advocacy—the need to improve security—"jibed" with that of The True Marcos Loyalist group, which focuses on the economic situation and needs of the poor.

Change in name, leadership

"There will be a change in the name (of the party-list group). They also changed leadership. My entry will find focus on what should be done," he said.

Bantay is led by Benjie Angeles, described by Palparan as someone who comes from "the agricultural sector." Palparan is a trustee of the group.

Members of the The True Marcos Loyalist group are the same members of Bantay, Palparan said.

Bayan Muna nominees

Nominees of Bayan Muna, one of Palparan's harshest critics, had filed their certificates of acceptance a couple of hours before the retired general did.

Bayan Muna topped the Social Weather Stations survey on party-list groups this month.

Bayan Muna Rep. Teddy Casiño told reporters that the group would study the "legal options" against Palparan's candidacy.

Casiño claimed Palparan would only take advantage of the legal immunity provided by Congress to its members.

But Palparan said he was ready to face Bayan Muna in court.

"If they have that capability, we also have that capability. It's a legal struggle. It's a fair game," Palparan said.

Earlier in the day, Palparan was the guest speaker of the Quijano de Manila symposium in Malate, Manila.

Palparan blamed the insurgents for using the needy for their own agenda. "They just want people to be poor, to remain poor, so they could use them. It's not true that they want to uplift the lives of the people," he said.

If given the chance to be part of Congress, Palparan said he would begin with organizational activities that will gather the poor so they won't be "vulnerable."

"Insurgents promote revolution, and we cannot allow that. There are other means of helping people. We only fight because we want to suppress fighting," he said.

He said the communist movement in the country was no longer anchored on ideology. "They know they cannot win anymore. If we will not address this it would be a problem for our kids."

It's official: Garci running for Congress, Palparan too

From page A1

With fanfare, Garcillano yesterday filed his certificate of candidacy (COC) at the provincial office of the Commission on Elections here at 10:45 a.m.

He arrived at the poll office with a caravan of at least 80 vehicles.

The "Hello Garci" scandal refers to the wiretapped telephone conversations between Garcillano and President Macapagal-Arroyo about giving her a lead of 1 million votes over her nearest rival in the 2004 elections while Congress was still canvassing the votes for presidential candidates.

The opposition claimed that the Garci tapes showed that Ms Arroyo cheated, but the President denied any wrongdoing. She, however, said "sorry" to the public over what she called her "lapse in judgment" in talking to an election official.

The scandal triggered street protests calling for her to step down, the resignation of several Cabinet officials and government executives, and impeachment complaints against her.

Ms Arroyo survived the political storm.

Garcillano is running as an independent candidate in the first district of Bukidnon, which covers the towns of Baungon, where he is a resident, Talakag, Malitbog, Kalilangan, Pangantucan, Libona, Manolo Fortich and Sumilao.

Bukidnon has three congressional districts.

Garcillano vs Malou Acosta

Garcillano will be facing Malou Acosta, sister of Rep. Neric Acosta, who is on his last term.

The official Lakas standard-bearer for the first district is Jose Pancrudo, who filed his COC on March 26.

Asked about possible cheating during the polls, Representative Acosta said: "We have faith in the people of Bukidnon but we are preparing for that."

"With what he (Garcillano) figured into, there is no doubt that there would be small Garci tapes all over the country. The 2007 elections would likely be the same or worse," Acosta added.

Garcillano's lawyer, Ed Tamondong, told the INQUIRER he expected his client to win.

Plenty of volunteers

Garcillano's lawyer, Ed Tamondong told the INQUIRER he expected his client to win.

He disclosed that desire to serve the public had pushed Garcillano to seek a public post and to test if the people really believed the allegations that he was involved in electoral fraud [that favored President Macapagal-Arroyo] in 2004.

Tamondong said Garcillano's bid for the Congress was his way of bringing the controversial issue to a public forum.

"We submit it to the people because it has never ended despite that the case, insofar as the legal matter is concerned, is already dismissed."

Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri told the INQUIRER that Garcillano's filing of COC was his right as a Filipino but it did not mean victory.

"He still has to face the people. The people will decide on his fate," Zubiri said.

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'Sir Ducat' gave ...

From page A1

Musmos Daycare Center, referred to him as "Sir Ducat."

The boy was the first to be freed. He was allowed by his captor to leave the bus at around 1 p.m.—more than four hours after the drama began—because he had fever.

Doctors kept the media out.

The boy arrived at the hospital crying but later calmed down and was able to talk, said attending psychiatrist Azores.

The boy said that "Sir Ducat" gave the children toys after he got on board the bus.

"According to him, his classmates did not seem to be afraid. But he got scared when he saw the guns," Azores said.

Biggest shock

The boy also told the doctor that he saw Ducat holding "a long gun, a short one on his hips," and what the kid referred to as "*pampasabog*."

Seeing the guns was the one moment that shocked the child, Azores said.

She said the boy's mother was probably undergoing shock herself.

Doctors could not say how long the children—two of whom were afflicted with conjunctivitis (sore eyes)—and the teachers would be kept in the hospital.

They were placed together in a "modified ward" at the hospital, said medical director Dr. Christia Padolina.

"The reason we are keeping them here is to prevent complications to prevent stress disorder ... What we plan to do is have them in groups of five and we'll ask them to narrate what happened to allow them to ventilate [their feelings]," said Azores.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said that while some looked tired and sleepy, many were still up and playing in the ward.

At the height of the hostage drama, many of the parents huddled inside one of the air-conditioned "bahay kubos" behind the Bonifacio Shrine, near where the bus carrying the hostages and Ducat was parked.

Thousands of people were scattered around the area of the Bonifacio Shrine to kibitz—some climbed trees for a better view, others stood on a concrete partition dividing the two lanes of Bonifacio Drive, while some sought shade in makeshift tents that had suddenly sprouted.

MAY 6, 1995: Ducat plants the Philippine flag on top of the Mabuhay Rotunda in Quezon City while on a hunger strike to call attention to his crusade to reject candidates of Chinese ancestry. INQUIRER PHOTO

Yellow police tapes saying "Do Not Cross This Line" failed to hold back the people.

Joel Fernandez, a 36-year-old fortune teller, said he had been watching behind the yellow tapes since 11:30 a.m. He came equipped with a telescope so he could see up close what was happening inside the bus.

Good vibes

Asked what he thought would happen, Fernandez said he felt good vibes about the incident and that it would be over by 7 p.m.

He had the right hunch—it was over by around 7 p.m.

Concern for the children

Brady Paguibitan, an employee of the Philippine Postal Office who was enjoying a day off, said Ducat's demands were shared by others.

"Everyone wants that," Paguibitan said, but added that Ducat's action was wrong. He said the day care owner needed to undergo a psychiatric test and deserved to go to jail.

Paguibitan said he had been sending his own "flash reports" about the incident to his office mates through text message.

He said the incident reminded him of the movie "Speed" since it was also about "a bus."

Paguibitan said he wouldn't have gone to see for himself what was happening if the victims had been adults—but as a father himself, he said he felt concerned about the kids.

Erap, FPJ blocs purged from GO, says Team Unity

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE ADMINISTRATION-BACKED Team Unity yesterday claimed that the Genuine Opposition (GO) has been weeding out Erap and FPJ forces from its campaign group.

"There is a silent purge going on and the GO now wants the people linked to former President Joseph Estrada and the late Fernando Poe Jr. out of key campaign duties," TU media manager and Eastern Samar Gov. Benjamin Evardone claimed in a statement.

Evardone said this was evident in the failure of GO candidates to show up in a major event in San Juan graced by Estrada himself and the alleged firing of GO campaigner Linggoy Alcuaz, a known Estrada and Poe backer.

"We don't know why GO snubbed Estrada's `day of glory' in San Juan where the jailed president, on a furlough, accepted an award as an 'outstanding citizen' of the town," said Evardone.

No show

Not one of the GO candidates showed up at the awards rite and this hurt Erap, Evardone claimed.

He also claimed that GO had "marginalized" the participation of the Estrada siblings—Sen. Jinggoy Estrada and San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito—in the GO campaign.

Evardone said that Alcuaz had threatened to resign from the campaign and hinted he would jump ship to Team Unity.

"The GO as a campaign organization is a sinking ship and all the candidates are finding their individual lifelines to survive," said Evardone.

Evardone traced the alleged crisis at GO to a power struggle between Sen. Serge Osmeña, the new campaign manager, and the group of former Sen. Ernesto Maceda who were at loggerheads on how to implement GO's campaign.

"The most significant move so far is the transfer of headquarters, which did not change anything in the shaky campaign except conveying the message that Serge Osmeña is in total control and the Poe and Estrada elements are out," Evardone said.

Aging center

As this developed, Team Unity Sen. Edgardo Angara has proposed the establishment of an "aging center" to promote the well-being of some six million senior citizens in the country.

"The 'aging center' would be an institution that could help open the window for revolutionary cure of diseases associated with aging, and stop the widening struggle against ordinary diseases," he told resident doctors, professors, nurses and hospital employees at the 7th Centennial Oration of the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) Monday.

Angara said that while the country's population was relatively young, policy makers and health workers must now anticipate the problems associated with aging—the study of the brains or memory, osteoporosis and other related areas.

He said the 'aging center' would complement his Senior Citizen's Law which provides benefits to the elderly.

"We cannot just stay put and try to have long lives. Like in other countries, we must be keen to lead scientific areas of mental and wellness, not only among the youth and the strong, but also to the old and the aged," he stressed.

Meanwhile, Angara is also spearheading a move to strengthen the 200,000 barangay health workers (BHWs) so they could be more effective in delivering health services.

Angara proposed that the BHWs be given compensation in recognition of their valuable services in enhancing community health and promised to initiate amendments to the Magna Carta of Public Health Workers to cover the BHWs," Angara added. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

Ping fears new scam

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

FROM FERTILIZER, IT'S NOW water irrigation.

Genuine Opposition candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson yesterday accused the Arroyo administration of using P5 billion earmarked for irrigation projects to boost the chances of its senatorial bets in this year's elections like what it did to the P728 fertilizer fund in the 2004 elections.

Same modus operandi

Lacson claimed the P5 billion budget programmed by the National Irrigation Administration for spending on agriculture water supply projects that were released starting March 7 this year has been diverted to mayors, governors and congressmen who the administration was courting to boost Team Unity candidates on May 14.

Lacson said this was the same modus operandi used in the fertilizer fund scam allegedly perpetrated by former Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joc-Joc" Bolante where fertilizer funds were allegedly diverted from the farm recipients to congressmen allied with the administration at the height of the 2004 campaign to ensure the President's poll victory.

"The principle of presumption of regularity may no longer hold during the election period because of the Arroyo government's track record of using multi-billion peso funds to bankroll the campaigns of administration candidates," said Lacson.

Concrete funds

Lacson warned the NIA management and other government agencies to make sure that all funds released during the election period would turn out to be "concrete" rather than "ghost projects." "Otherwise, I will be forced to disclose the list of recipients and beneficiaries which can be easily updated through my networks in the countryside," said Lacson.

Lacson said the dubious timing of massive government funding releases during the election has been the main "pattern" of the administration's strategy in past elections citing the fertilizer fund scam, the release of Philhealth cards in 2004 and the recent release of a P1 billion fund to alleviate hunger.

Judge found guilty of bribery

FOR ACCEPTING A BRIBE OF P5,000 seven years ago, a former municipal judge of San Fernando, Pampanga, was sentenced to six months in prison and disqualified from holding office.

The Sandiganbayan 3rd Division also ordered Judge Daniel Liangco, who was found guilty of direct bribery, to pay a fine of P10,000, with a subsidiary penalty of imprisonment in case of insolvency.

According to court records, Liangco solicited and received P5,000 from businessman Ivan Jordan Gopiao in exchange for the dropping of two cases against the latter.

Gopiao, the owner of a rent-a-car and music lounge in San Fernando, was charged with theft in September 1998. A second case involved violations of Article 201 of Presidential Decree 969, or the exhibition of indecent and obscene shows.

In his testimony, Gopiao said Liangco initially solicited P40,000 to P50,000 from him, later reduced to P41,000. He paid the first installment of P5,000, but went straight to the National Bureau of Investigation to file a complaint of bribery against the judge.

Five days later, Liangco was arrested in an entrapment operation after he accepted an envelope containing P5,000 from Gopiao in his chamber.

Gopiao left after the judge asked him to put the envelope in his desk drawer. When the NBI agents moved to make the arrest, they found the money without the envelope in the judge's right pants pocket.

The judge contended that the case against him was "a malicious prosecution concocted by [Gopiao] to exact revenge." He said he was about to go after the complainant to return the money but a phone call prevented him from doing so.

The court said the alibi was "lame and not worthy of belief." *Jocelyn R. Uy*

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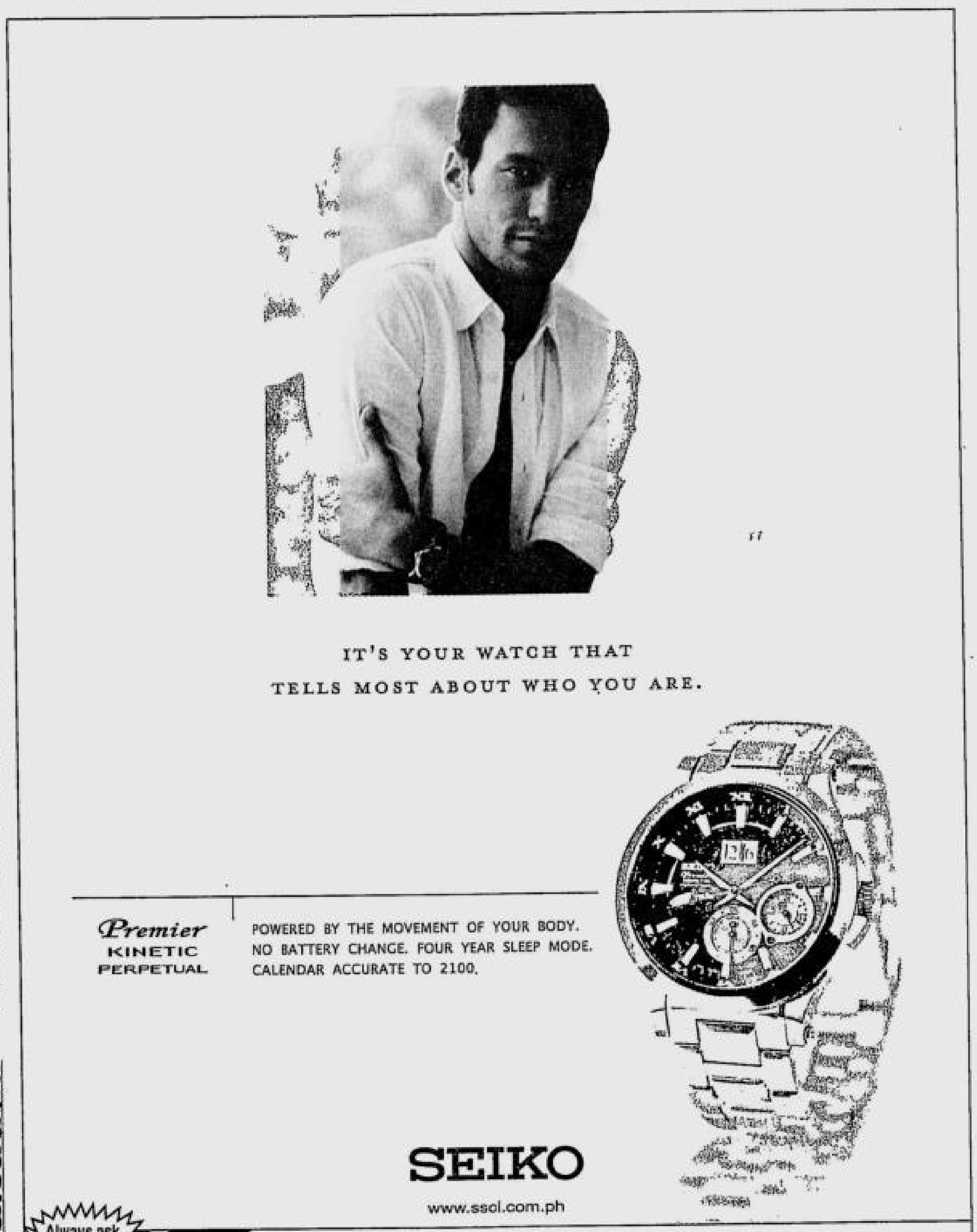

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World watched drama; hostage taker hits poverty

From page A1

aware of what was going on around them, prompting embarrassed Malacañang officials to go on a damage-control mode.

"I am sorry I took these children in a violent action to call the attention of the Filipino people to 'open their minds to the political reality," Ducat said in interviews broadcast through a wireless amplifier.

"There's so much corruption in the country. We're No. 1 in Asia in corruption and yet ours is the only country in Asia that is in fear of God," he said in an apparent bid to paint the irony of the situation.

"I am calling on the Filipino people to stop the rotten political system. Don't rely on the politicians for your future. No one can help you but yourselves," he said in one address that lasted 15 minutes.

He referred to the coming May elections and politicians who he said were becoming richer while majority of Filipinos grappled with poverty. "Look at those who we vote for. Those we vote for are spending millions and millions of pesos. They will certainly seek a payback."

For those who saw on international cable TV and read on cyberspace the drama in Manila, Ducat's spiel was both pathetic, hilarious and painfully true.

But he did manage to spark a potential public relations disaster for Malacañang, a day after the President made an unprecedented gesture by becoming the first head of government to appear in Publish Asia, a gathering of international editors and publishers being held in Manila for the first time.

Embarrassing

"This is really embarrassing," said Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita. "But we do not have control over the minds of people, especially those with criminal minds."

Ermita appeared at a press briefing an hour after Ms Arroyo dispatched Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando to negotiate the release of the children. He denied Malacanang was panicking and insisted that the incident was a police problem. He acknowledged that because children were involved, the Palace was concerned.

Ermita said that after he received reports about the hostage-taking from the Presidential Situation Room, he informed Ms Arroyo about it during her visit to the FTI complex at 11 a.m. to send off a shipment of Philippine mangoes to the United States. *(See related story on Page A4.)*

Ermita said he was going to ask Education Undersecretary Ted Bacani to ensure that the demand for scholarships for 147 schoolchildren in Ducat's day care center at Parola in the Tondo district would be given.

Malacañang later released an announcement from AMA Computer School owner Amable Aguiluz that he would grant the scholarships.

Ermita said the hostage-taking gave the wrong impression to the world.

"Because other issues are being dragged into this, they might think it is very chaotic here in Manila or in the Philippines especially since there is a forthcoming election but the authorities are doing everything to prevent or eliminate incidents like this," Ermita said.

'Is this for real?'

If Ducat thought he was getting a platform to secure a hearing for his grievances from top editors and publishers attending the 7th Publish Asia conference at Manila Hotel just a few blocks away, he was dead wrong.

"As bad as corruption is, it's wrong to put innocent children's lives at risk," said Indonesian Jati Hidayat, editor in chief of Parenting Magazine, looking at the event on his laptop. "I am quite anticorruption. I am a parent myself."

David Savelson, an American assistant director for multimedia of the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, said: "I don't know if I am more upset with him than with the corruption. Corruption is systemic, can be worked out. It's not going to fix it. I am also a parent. I would be outraged. There are nonviolent ways to do it. It would be more powerful to organize to fight corruption. He just failed."

Told about the incident, Cheryl Newson, managing director of Inxcess Pty in Australia, who was also at the Publish Asia gathering, exclaimed: "My God! What is the police going to do about it. Are we in danger? Is this for real?"

George Jacob, a journalist from South India, said he never expected the event happening in the Philippines. "It's more routine in the United States, which is full of crazies. He has to be mentally off. No sane man would do such a thing."

Robert W. Murphy, managing director of Sandstone Software based in Melbourne, Australia, said:

"Isn't this another form of using international media to focus on a local political situation where there is really none? We had a President here delivering a magnificent opening speech which clearly pointed to a new Philippine open democracy with freedom of speech. Based on her comments, I think situations like these are purely being used for political pitching where sadly there is nothing at all … It has no bearing at all with the media … It's not really good when kids are involved. It's a sad thing. It's very sad to hear."

'Absolutely criminal'

Pete Resele, software company executive from West Germany, said Ducat was "a bad guy."

"He's absolutely criminal. It's ridiculous to accuse the government in this way … You can protest peacefully. This is not the way," said Rosele.

Rabi Dhariwal, CEO of the Times of India, said: "No cause can justify what he's doing to those children. There are many ways in a democracy of drawing attention to corruption … These children are being traumatized. They will never forget … This is passive terrorism. He's terrorizing those kids. There are other ways in a democracy to draw attention."

Some Filipinos overseas were aghast.

"When you think of it, I mean, really think of it, it's sad," said Blanche Rivera, 28, a Filipino magazine writer in Hong Kong, who watched the story unfold on Yahoo!

Another Filipino in Bangkok, Leilani Gallardo, said she thought she would download the story of the hostage drama from the INQUIRER website and pass it on to an American friend in Italy "so he can make fun of Pinoys again."

"I thought it was pathetic that once again, another Pinoy had to resort to extreme means to express what seems to be a legitimate concern," Gallardo said.

Desperate means

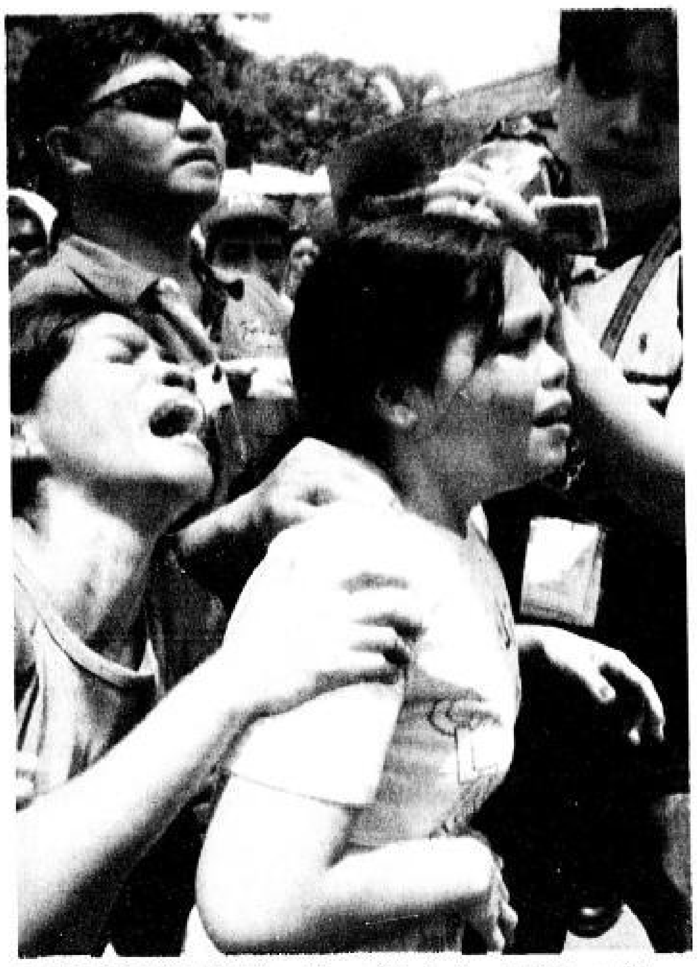
The militant labor group Partido ng Manggagawa yesterday said that even if it does not approve Armand Ducat Jr.'s taking children as hostages, workers could sympathize with the message he was advocating.

"It is a sign of the times that someone needs to go to such desperate means to achieve such simple ends," said PM party-list Rep. Renato Magtubo.

"Such basic needs as education, land and housing must be a matter of right instead of concessions in return for child hostages," he added.

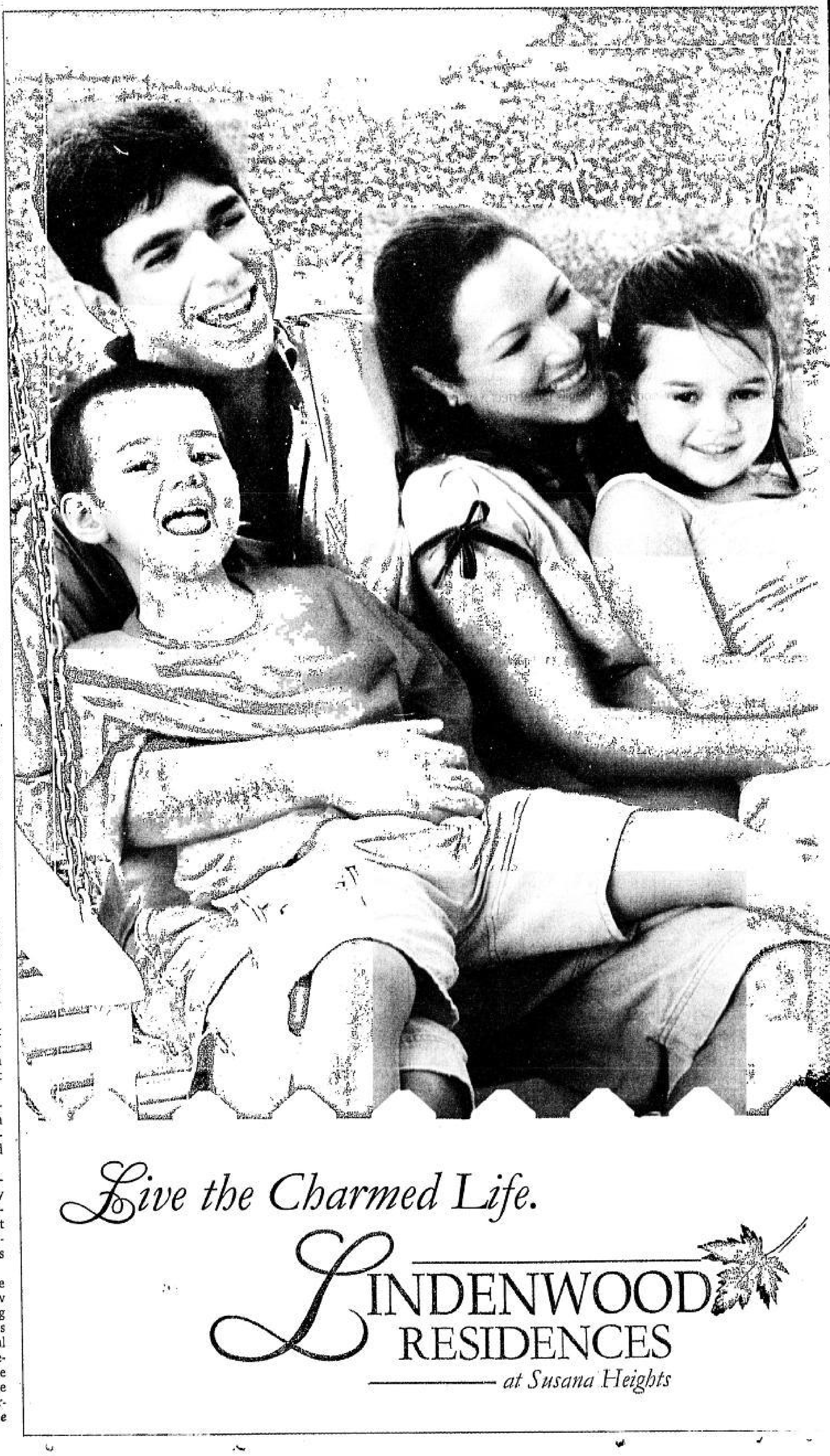
Magtubo said ordinary Filipinos could easily identify with Ducat's demands and advocacies, but it will be difficult for them to support him because he took children as hostages.

The labor leader used the hostage-taking to attack that new antiterror law, saying that taking a bus full of children as hostages or staging a strike with several busloads of adults to demand legitimate concessions from the government both fall under the government's definition of terrorism. *With a report from Jerome Aning*



"FREE OUR CHILDREN," mothers of the hostaged children wail. Even in their lamentations, they still say Ducat is a good person and they bear no ill feelings toward him. RYAN LIM

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME: Tension runs high early on in the hostage dram City Hall.



2 men free 26 kids after 10 hours

at Liwasang Bonifacio near the Manila
ERIK ARAZAS

From page A1

after a 10-hour standoff that he had used to denounce corruption in government and demanded free education for poor children.

Clutching dolls, toys and backpacks, the children began filing off the bus shortly after 7 p.m. as Ducat had promised in a rambling message delivered via a loudspeaker hours earlier.

As jubilant parents were reunited with their children, Ducat was led to a waiting police car and driven away.

"I accept that I should be jailed because what I did was against the law," said the man who had staged other attention-grabbing stunts in the past.

Ducat, who received assurances that his students would get a good education, apologized to them and to the police.

Police said Ducat would be charged with serious illegal detention, illegal possession of firearms, alarm and scandal and violation of the election gun ban.

The second man was brought to the precinct with Ducat. He was identified as Cesar Carbonnel, 39, said to be a consultant of Ducat. Police did not say if similar charges would be brought against Carbonnel.

The drama began just after the crack of dawn yesterday when a purple-and-gray bus picked up 26 children and four teachers from Musmos Day Care Center in Tondo for a field trip at the end of the school year.

The bus then drove to the Blue Wave Commercial area, picked up boxes of food from Jollibee, then on to a garage where Ducat, the center's owner, got on board, carrying toys.

Bus driver Deogracias Bugarin said later that, as directed, he proceeded to the Andres Bonifacio Shrine beside the Manila City Hall, where Ducat, accompanied by another man and armed with a .45 cal. pistol, an Uzi assault rifle and two grenades, announced, *"Pare, hostage 'to"* (This is a hostage situation).

As a traffic jam built up and police and reporters converged at the scene, Ducat denounced official corruption and demanded better lives for the poor children.

It was the kind of media coverage that Ducat, with a history of attention-grabbing stunts, clearly wanted. And with a local and international television audience, he got it.

Ducat, who founded the 145-student day care center about four years ago in Tondo, had chartered the tourist bus for a field trip marking the end of the school year.

The former contractor taped a handwritten sheet of paper to the windshield, saying he and a companion were holding 26 children and four teachers and were armed. It also gave Ducat's cell phone number.

"I love these kids, that's why I am here," Ducat told dzMM radio by mobile phone. "I invited the children for a field trip ... You can be assured that I cannot hurt the children. In case I need to shed blood, I will not be the first to fire. I am telling the policemen, have pity on these children."

President Macapagal-Arroyo said she was glad the children were safe and vowed to throw the full force of the law at the hostage-takers.

"I am ordering speedy prosecution to keep this recidivist from doing it again, and to warn others from copycat behavior. The end does not justify the means," Ms Arroyo said in a statement.

"Despite the seemingly noble issues being raised in this bizarre drama, this government shall not stand for prank-terrorism," she said.

Driver Bugarin, who escaped after he was allowed to smoke outside, said he thought there were four people involved in the hostage-taking. He said that the children, aged 5 to 7, did not know what was going on.

"When the toys were distributed, they were very happy. They were even playing," said Bugarin. "I thought it was just a joke. And then I saw the placard in front of the bus. I decided not to return."

During the standoff, police had surrounded the bus, owned by Philippine Trans Corp., its emergency lights flashing and engine running. Black-clad bomb squads and SWAT teams watched from behind the Bonifacio shrine. Ambulances, fire trucks and crisis teams from the Social Welfare Department stood on standby.

The President's office was monitoring the hostage drama closely.

TV footage showed the children waving from the windows, apparently to show they were OK, before the curtains were closed.

The mothers of some of the hostaged children went on radio to tearfully appeal for their children's safety.

Ducat said the hostage-taking was for the children's benefit.

"I am asking for justice so they can have continued education up to college," Ducat said.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral talked with Ducat and offered assurances that the children would get a good education.

Sen. Bong Revilla, who said he knew Ducat, was allowed to board the bus for negotiations. Some portions of their conversation was broadcast live on radio. The sounds of the kids playing, singing and talking could be heard in the background.

A boy, who was nursing a fever, was released to Revilla.

With the children chanting his name, Ducat was given a wireless microphone and allowed to make a rambling statement in which he railed against corruption and politicians' failure to make good on promises of free education and housing for the poor.

"While generations of politicians change, we continue to suffer in poverty," Ducat said. "These politicians promise education, health and housing, but unless we stop corruption ... they will just feast on the budget."

The incident virtually shut down the capital's main office building, drew thousands of onlookers and was beamed live around the world — drawing the type of media coverage that Ducat clearly wanted with midterm elections scheduled for May. *With reports from Allison Lopez and AP*

FREE at last, and keeping close to mama.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Ducat: Not your ...

From page A1

In February 2001, Ducat again made news—this time as a hero: He carried out what authorities considered to be a "citizen's arrest" and nabbed two Bureau of Internal Revenue officers who allegedly extorted P100,000 from Korean companies in Cavite.

Ducat made the arrests because he wanted foreign firms to pay the correct taxes to the government, according to a police officer who lauded his action.

Initial accounts given by his family members and acquaintances yesterday also described Ducat as a successful businessman, a philanthropist to the slum neighborhoods of Tondo, Manila, and an aspiring local politician.

He's not your typical cornered man of desperation.

Ducat owns a construction firm, a handicraft factory, and the Spring Green Village subdivision in Cavite, according to his son Buboy, when reached on the phone at around noon.

He finances the primary education of up to 100 children each year in Tondo alone, Buboy added. (Buboy said he was on his way to Angeles City when he heard of the hostage-taking incident on radio.)

A father of 12 children, Ducat is considered the most successful "breadwinner" of the clan, according to his nephew Ryan, a college student who himself got the money for his last tuition courtesy of his rich, generous uncle.

"He's a cheerful person and with no known personal problems. That's why I really don't know why he did this," said Ryan, who was at the hostage scene at around noon.

Problem with the heart

Ducat recently underwent heart surgery at Cardinal Santos Hospital, according to Ryan and Buboy. He is not a heavy drinker and also not known to burst into heated political discourse with his family members and circle of friends, they added.

In media interviews earlier in the day, both men denied that Ducat could be mentally unstable. If so, how can he be that successful in his businesses and profession, they stressed.

"Aling Inday," who has a child enrolled at the day care center owned by Ducat but who was not among the hostaged children, said the man "is very kind and has helped a lot of people."

Ducat's beneficiaries included Tondo residents who needed money for a decent burial, she recalled.

But the other, disturbing side of Ducat reasserted itself yesterday.

The way he executed the hostage-taking indicated some measure of planning:

Early reports indicated he had at least two other male aides on the bus who helped him seize the vehicle and its passengers.

At the end of the drama, the INQUIRER learned Ducat had only one aide, Cesar Carbonell.

He was ready with a handwritten sign that he placed on the front glass window of the bus.

He reportedly even handed out toys and made the children wear T-shirts printed with his name "Jun Ducat" and the tagline "Tulong! Sulong!"

Before reaching City Hall, he seemed to have made sure the hostaged children would have something to eat. He instructed the bus driver to stop at a fast-food chain and order packed meals.

First demand

He ordered the bus parked right in the heart of Manila, near the monument of revolutionary hero Andres Bonifacio, at that, at a highly visible spot on the street.

His first demand was for an amplifier, which, according to police officers seasoned in such crises, was the first sign that Ducat had not yet fallen into a murderous rage but merely wanted to be "heard."

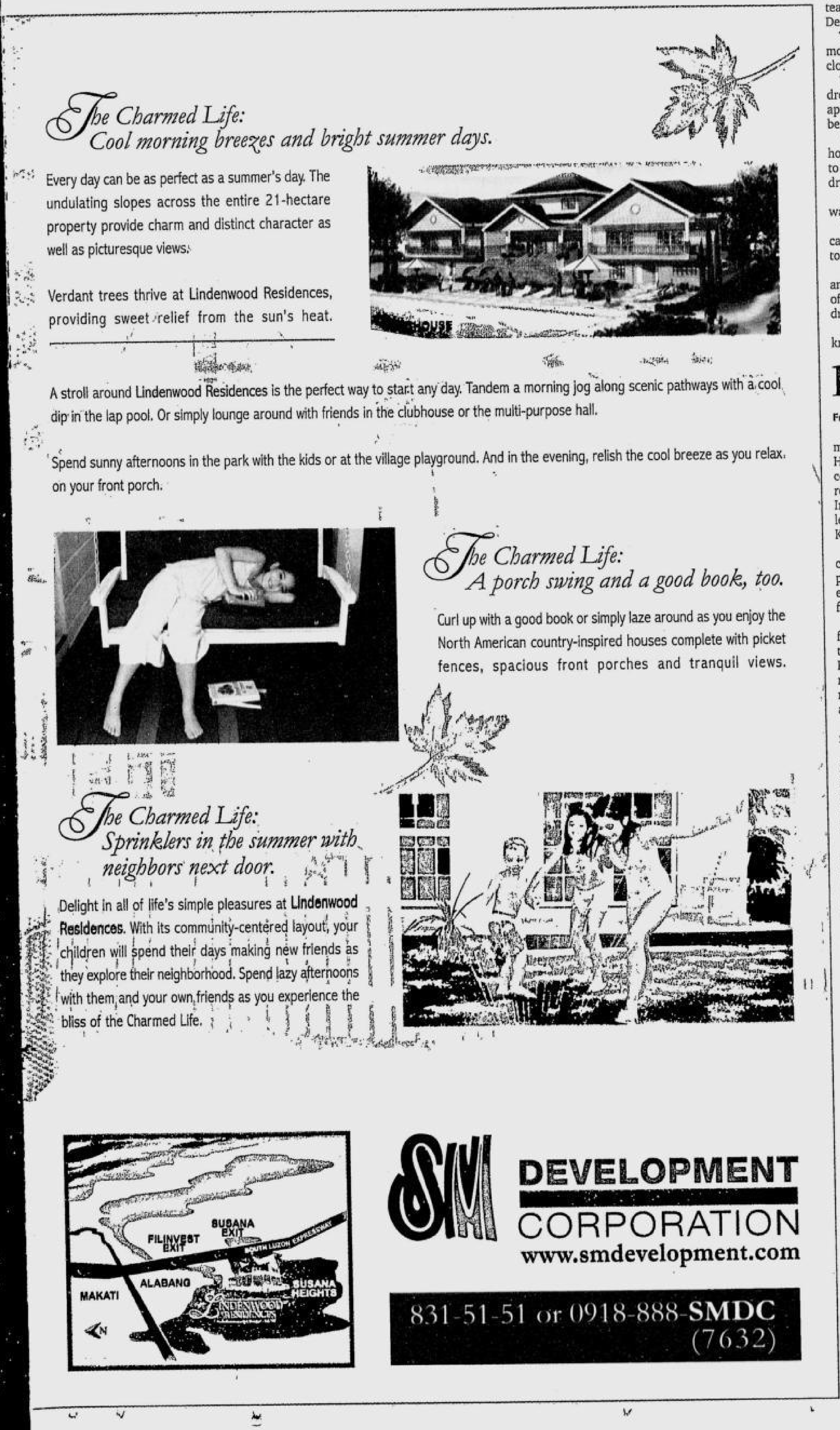
The INQUIRER overheard a ground commander saying: "Just give him time. He'll go down once he has said all that he wanted to say, even without negotiation."

Manila Mayor Lito Atienza described Ducat as an "active local politician" who had previously run for congressman and city councilor.

"I heard that he is angling for the House (of Representatives) again these coming elections in the 3rd District of Manila," Atienza added.

Msgr. Melchor David, who witnessed Ducat's 1989 hostage-taking of two priests, rushed to the scene and could only shake his head on seeing Ducat at it again.

"I'm not sure about his motive this time. But in terms of expressing himself, this is not the first time he used violence as his method, all at the expense of other people."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INQUIRER
Vol. 22 No. 111

OPINION

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The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 / 528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

Playing with figures

IN PRESS INTERVIEWS, PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo refuses to answer questions about politics and insists on limiting the discussion to economic issues. Her spokesman, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, explains that she wants to focus on sustaining the momentum of growth brought about by the economic reforms she has initiated and doesn't want to be distracted by politics.

EDITORIAL

But apparently, the President's preference for things economic has not prevented the administration from making political capital out of its achievements in the economic field. Last Sunday, for instance, the government took out a two-page ad in some major newspapers trumpeting "The Real Score on President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's Economic Performance." The ad was the administration's response to the results of two recent surveys done by the Social Weather Stations showing the prevalence of hunger at an all-time high and self-rated poverty at 53 percent. And coming right in the middle of the campaign season, it was obviously intended to shore up the sagging hopes of the majority of the administration's senatorial candidates.

The figures cited in the ad are quite impressive: Last year, the stock market posted a 42-percent gain and reached a 10-year high. Foreign exchange remittances of overseas Filipino workers also broke records in 2006. Business confidence was at its peak, while the budget deficit was at its lowest in eight years. Inflation was down to 3.9 percent, the lowest in more than three years. And the peso rose to its highest value in six years, making it the "best performing currency" in Asia.

But to the administration, the most meaningful measure of performance is the growth in Gross Domestic Product. The ad pointed out that under Ms Arroyo, the country has experienced six years of uninterrupted growth. Not only that, the average GDP growth rate has been fastest during her presidency at 4.37 percent, compared to 3.86 percent during the Marcos years, 3.83 percent in Corazon Aquino's time, 3.76 percent under Fidel Ramos and 2.93 percent under Joseph Estrada.

All these data look good, but they are not good enough in a region of high-achieving nations. While the Philippine economy has shaken off its sluggishness under Ms Arroyo, it remains a laggard. The Asian Development Bank, for one, sees the Philippines continuing to trail most of its neighbors in the next two years. While the ADB predicts that the whole of Southeast Asia will grow by 5.6 percent this year and 5.9 percent in 2008, it says Philippine GDP growth will be a "modest" 5.4 percent and 5.8 percent, respectively.

What is worse is that such rates of growth hardly make a dent on widespread poverty. The ADB report noted that unemployment remained at about 8 percent, with high school and college graduates making up more than half of the jobless. Even more "worrisome," it said, was that unemployment rose from 18 percent in 2004 to 23 percent in 2006, meaning more and more workers were either working part-time or doing jobs that didn't match their skills or educational attainment.

These are figures the administration seems to overlook when it boasts about having created 897,000 jobs every year for the past six years; but they largely explain why poverty remains undiminished, and why hunger continues to stalk the land.

And the problem cannot be solved by throwing P1 billion—or even P10 billion—more into the government's feeding program. It may cut the number of hungry people in the next survey, but it will not make widespread hunger go away.

To make some real headway in the war on poverty, the growth rate will have to be accelerated and more jobs will have to be created. As the ADB put it, the Philippines needs to achieve a "higher growth trajectory and create more and higher-quality jobs for the rising number of unemployed, underemployed and new entrants in the labor force." That means an 8 percent average growth rate in the next 20 years, the ADB said, which can only be achieved by boosting services and "re-energizing" the manufacturing sector. Jesus Felipe, the ADB's chief economist, said that to catch up with its neighbors, the Philippine economy should be transformed in such a way that its resources are employed to produce high value-added products and more sophisticated exports even as labor productivity is improved.

That's a tall order, and it cannot be achieved by throwing at the public the most favorable economic statistics to dispute the unflattering findings of public opinion surveys.

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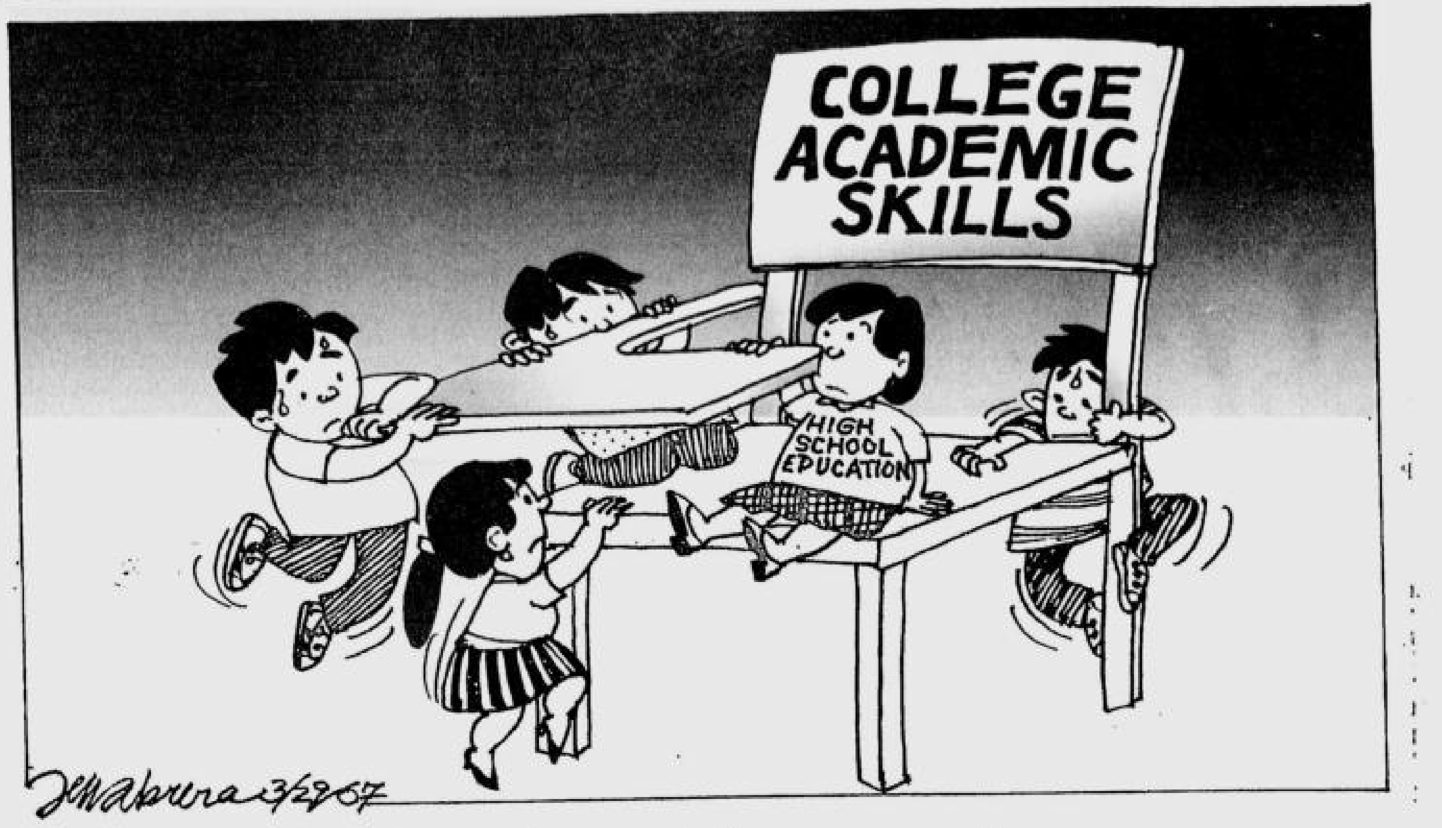

Experimental generosity

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"NAGGING QUESTIONS ON GIVING" CROPPED up in the latest Social Weather Stations survey that probed Filipino patterns of sharing with the needy. So, are we tightwads?

Whether by the rich or the hard-up, the frequency of giving to charity is "pitifully low," reports survey leader Dr. Eduardo Roberto. The answers given by 1,200 respondents, aged 17 to 65 nationwide, show that people chip in "only 12 times a year at most, or once a year at least."

"*Ang kuripot na mayaman/ay madalas na pagnakawan*(The rich miser is often robbed)," a Filipino proverb says. Despite folk wisdom, giving remains niggardly. The causes vary—from 62 percent for heart-tugging street kids to 8 percent for indigenous people, mostly unseen.

Roberto explains that the online portal seeks more givers, like international donors and overseas Filipino workers. OFWs remitted $12.8 billion home last year. Bulk of the OFW dollar goes to food, clothing and shelter. And a small balance goes to poorly documented donations. "Migrants abroad are the country's biggest Filipino donors, not corporations," Jeremiah Opiniano told a University of San Francisco seminar. Non-profit organizations that tap people abroad include: Ayala Foundation USA, Gawad Kalinga, ABS-CBN Foundation, etc.

"If you don't understand the donor as a migrant, then you'll never sense the hardships in money earned abroad," Opiniano added. "Nor will you will unleash the fullest potentials of migrant philanthropy."

Social customs, like a community giving once a month, shape the giving patterns more than attitudes, Roberto reports. Really? Wouldn't that whittle John Gokongwei Jr.'s 80th birthday donation of P10.25 billion for schools that shaped him—De La Salle, Ateneo and San Carlos University—to just playing along with the crowd? "Life has been good to me," Gokongwei said. "I want to give back the blessings I received."

John D. Rockefeller didn't credit "social customs" for his decision to share his fortune. He merely said: "Funeral hearses have no baggage racks."

Pinning the blame for "lickpenny" decisions by excluding personal accountability, would let off the hook the student-less Muslim Youth Foundation of Joseph Estrada and Ferdinand Marcos' shell foundations in Liechtenstein and elsewhere.

Where does this leave ordinary folk, like my 9-year-old grandson Adrian? From his vacation money, his parents suggested: share 10 percent for "Operation Smile" that arranges surgery for children with harelip deformities. "Can I just give 20 bucks?" he asked in all seriousness. The family dinner table erupted with laughter.

From this mirth, did Adrian learn that he is his brother's keeper? Acceptance of personal accountability, in other equally modest homes, could lessen the corrosive cynicism in a society where many leaders live by the axiom that cash is the only law. Checkbook balances open doors here. Car models set the pecking order at dinner tables. "Net worth equals self-worth" is how a banker explains this "pecuniary decency."

A society that enthrones ill-gotten opulence rewrites automatically its definition of necessity. We've seen that in 3,000 shoes, mansions for presidential concubines and quarter-of-a-million pesos lampposts in Cebu. Even Abu Sayyaf thugs jacked up demands for ransom, wives and Ray-Ban sunglasses. "There are more important things than transporting gold to the grave," the Book of Akbhar says.

Given these distorted priorities, it's no wonder that food, medicine, shelter—even human warmth—perennially run short. "There is enough for man's needs," Mahatma Gandhi once wryly observed. "But never enough for his greed."

So how much does one give? Former Science Secretary Filemon Uriarte and his wife Jean offer a rule of thumb for what they call "experimental generosity": 10 percent—not merely of one's wealth, but also of talent and time—for others.

This is a 21st-century formulation of what the ancients called the "tithe": "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse that there may be food in my house, and try me in this, says the Lord of hosts. Shall I not open for you the floodgates of heaven, to pour down blessings upon you without measure?" (Malachai 3:10)

Try me. This is a dare, Uriarte says. Share. Give. And then see for yourselves: Who will outdo who in generosity? "Full measure, pressed down, and spilling over," the Teacher offered in return.

In an International Herald Tribune column, titled "Nagging Questions On Giving," Stephen Klaidman asks: Do we reject "humanity every time we avert our eyes from a beggar? ... Those of us who are better off are not necessarily a nasty and venal lot," he adds. "It just means we all have the capacity to share more than we do. And it's not just only money, but time and simple human warmth."

"*Lola*, I really need this," our 3-year-old granddaughter Kristin said, clutching the five-peso coin. Until our car reached the "Home for Dying Destitutes," the wife explained: that needs of others could be greater; that here was a Presence in sharing.

To the Mother Teresa nun, Kristin unclenched her fist, gave P2—and kept three.

The wife and I will long be gone when Kristin, as a mature woman, will have to live out the truth that Winston Churchill said: "We make a living by what we get. But we make a life by what we give away."

* * *

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Where there's smoke

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'VE SEEN THIS AD FOR SOME TIME IN OUR newspaper and I'm a little leery of it. That is the ad for Nicorette. It shows a guy in the throes of much agitation, biting on a chess piece while playing chess. It says: "Quitting smoking isn't easy. Stopping abruptly doesn't work for everyone. Reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke before completely quitting is a clinically proven alternative. Start by cutting down a target number of cigarettes that you smoke each day while using Nicorette to control your cravings. Then it's easier to quit for good."

That may not entirely be false advertising, but it certainly holds out a false promise to those who are desperate to quit smoking.

Nicotine replacements are of course sanctioned by doctors as a help in quitting smoking. The reason is simple. Smoking is an addiction. There are no ifs, ands, or buts about it. It is an addiction in the same way that dependence on heroin and cocaine is. The body reacts violently to the deprivation of nicotine among smokers. So nicotine replacements help to ease the transition to not smoking by continuing to supply the body with what it has gotten addicted to. Nicorette comes in the form of a 2-mg nicotine gum.

But here's the very big rub. Smoking isn't just a physical addiction, it is also—and probably far more so—a psychological one. Smoking gets factored into pretty much everything the smoker does, from waking up, to drinking coffee, to working, to—as popularized by the movies—relaxing after amorous exertions. What makes smoking the hardest thing to give up is not just the torture the nicotine inflicts on our brain but the pleasure it spreads in our minds.

Cutting down on cigarettes while taking nicotine replacements does **not** make it "easier to quit for good." It makes it harder. That is so because while the nicotine replacements remove the physical need, continuing to smoke reinforces the psychological need. The American Cancer Society (ACS) expressly warns: "While it sounds logical to cut down in order to quit gradually, in practice this method is difficult."

There is really no substitute for cold turkey, or quitting all at once. It's like democracy: It's a horrible system, but there's none better. Again the ACS says so. By all means take nicotine replacements, it says, but set a date for when you're going to throw away that last cigarette, and do. "On your Quit Day ... do not smoke. That means ... not even one puff!"

I have more than the authority of the ACS to make my bold pronouncements. I have the weight of experience. I've told this story a couple of times before, but it bears telling again. I quit smoking in 1983, never imagining I possibly could. I was a heavy smoker, two packs a day, alternately Marlboro and Philip Morris menthol, three packs on days that I drank or wrote my ass off. As a result, my asthma, which I outgrew as a child, came back; and for the last five years before I quit, I was not without some lung disease or the other. I knew I had to quit, but even with those threats to life, I found it the hardest thing to do.

The physical was the least of my worries, the psychological was first. My smoking was work-related. I absolutely could not think without cigarettes, least of all in front of the typewriter. PCs weren't the rage then (in the 1970s and 1980s) and all I had was a trusty manual typewriter to fend off the ravages of hunger. It was completely Pavlovian, or a conditioned reflex: I saw a typewriter, I needed to smoke.

I quit five times before I finally managed to quit for good, each time by cold turkey. I did not take nicotine replacements. I was able to quit for seven months at one time but came back to it because of a stupid thing, which I should warn prospective quitters about. It was Christmas, and swept by an expansive and jovial mood while at a party, I decided to take one puff off a friend's cigarette, Christmas *naman*. That one puff broke the dam. By New Year, I was a full-fledged smoker all over again.

The fifth time was my last time. It was no less violent than the previous ones. My withdrawal was horrendous. I managed to not crave a smoke while socializing or even, well, after amorous exertions. But I could not manage to write, or even think clearly without cigarettes. My brain was vaporous, more clouded (I felt) than my lungs were with smoke when I smoked. To break the association between typewriter and cigarettes, and to allow me to write, which was the glue that kept my and my family's body and soul together, I went back to long hand! I wrote quite literally by pen and paper, the paper taking the form of yellow pad. That was how I wrote the short story that won first prize in the Palanca in 1985.

By the time I discovered the wonders of word processing and took to it like fish to water, I was well past my withdrawal period. I've been writing with a keyboard since then. I've been writing faster, better, and without feeling afterward like my lungs have gone through World War II.

Take it from me, having come from a worst-case scenario, it can be done. But not if you delude yourself into thinking you can smoke yourself down to zero. You can't and you won't. By all means take nicotine replacements, but to quote the ACS, "do not smoke, that is not at all, not even a puff." It won't be easy, but all the other ways—their blithe assurances notwithstanding—will be harder.

What helped me tremendously was reading someone who said there was something just as powerful or compelling as, if not more so than, smoking. That was, not smoking. Not smoking is an awesome force all by itself, making you wonder, once its inertia kicks in, whatever made you smoke in the first place. If that doesn't do the trick for you, well, you always have this to fall back on:

Where there's smoke, there's cancer.

The return of the native

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

THE MEDIA HAVE NOTED THAT THE OFFICIAL report to the United Nations submitted by Special Rapporteur Philip Alston appears more balanced than the statements he made after his 10-day visit here, which tended to blame the military entirely for the unsolved killings. One reason for Alston's enlightenment may be the fact that the government's side is now being heard here and abroad, no thanks to US Sen. Barbara Boxer, who presided over a hearing in the US Senate sub-committee on East Asia and the Pacific. Boxer invited only leftist elements to testify during that hearing in Washington, and this was criticized as one-sided.

Among the efforts to convey the government's position on the unsolved killings, I was quite impressed by the statement of Ambassador to Washington Willy Gaa which was entered into the US sub-committee's official records. He pointed out such steps as the creation of the Melo Commission and a separate fact-finding body jointly set up by the justice and national defense departments in coordination with the Commission on Human Rights, the Supreme Court's creation of special courts, the AFP's creation of a Human Rights Office (perhaps the first such office in the world), and the strengthening of the Witness Protection Program.

* * *

The ambassador also disputed the allegation by leftist groups that US military assistance is being misused by RP security forces for human rights violations and political killings. He pointed out that the Jusmag's "strong oversight mechanism" is so efficient that the AFP "must even secure its prior approval before the AFP could dispose of already unusable equipment." Gaa also stressed that government recognizes that a military solution alone cannot solve insurgency and terrorism, as poverty and the accompanying despondency and despair have to be addressed. He also stressed that the recognition that "hostilities exact a heavy toll in human lives and diverted resources" has prompted government to engage the CPP-NPA in peace talks, but that "they failed because of the CPP-NPA's repeated violations of the ceasefire agreement, which underscored its bad faith."

Straight talk such as Gaa's helps set the record straight. As was stressed to the Filipino ambassadors who were gathered here by the DFA last week to get new policy directions, diplomacy nowadays has to be engaged in propaganda warfare against terrorism and insurgency. Our envoys must be well-prepared for it.

* * *

Our longtime family friend, painter-sculptor Tomas Concepcion, who has worked out of Rome for the past 40 years, has returned to stage a long overdue one-man show. Tom, the sectoral representative of the overseas Filipino workers during the Ramos administration and younger brother of my late colleague in the anti-nuclear plant movement, Mary Concepcion Bautista, will present his "Homage to Michelangelo" at Galleria Duemilla in Pasay City, starting Saturday, March 31, with Italian Ambassador Rubens Anna Fedele as guest of honor. The 72-year-old Tom, who is descended from Maranaw royalty, reveres the great 15th-century Italian Renaissance painter-sculptor as the "first modernist to free art from the stiff and strict stereotype" and his own "liberator." But aside from painting interpretations of the Renaissance master and his "must-see lithographs," Tom will also exhibit his famous bronzes. Among them is "Anguished Prisoner," the first of his "Iraq Series," as a continuing protest against the war "that's sadly being waged in the name of democracy."

* * *

I first met Tom in 1989, when I went to Europe with my two young sons in the course of doing some articles on the Marcos wealth hidden in Switzerland. On the way home from Bern, we made a stopover in Rome as MaryCon insisted that I meet her kid brother. Since then our friendship grew and he has become a member of our extended family. Whenever we are in Rome we stay in his flat just outside the Vatican walls. Sometimes we go to his elegant villa nestled in the ruins of the walled Canossa Castle in Tarquinia, about an hour's train-ride from Rome. Nowadays he is doing commissioned works at Tarquinia, the ancient seat of Etruscan civilization that antedates Roman civilization, because he finds Rome already too crowded with tourists and hates the traffic.

* * *

Tom should be judged by his works. Among his most famous are the life-size sculptures of Pope John Paul II on display in Guam and Mexico, and Ninoy Aquino, with whom he was closely associated politically, now found in the People's Park on Edsa. Tom feels passionately about his art, and in Italy, where, as he puts it, every nook and cranny of the towns and cities are virtual museums, he is in his element. Whenever we're in Italy, he advises us on our itinerary and each session is a colorful historical, artistic and political lecture, spiced with gossip about historical figures and Italian politics. Once my husband and I returned to Rome after a trip up north that included a visit to Padua, which is known for St. Anthony as well as the frescoes of medieval Italian painter Giotto, then newly restored, in the Arena Chapel. My husband, an ex-military man, asked Tom what was the difference between "frescoes" and paintings, and the latter spent two hours discussing the subject.

* * *

Tom can be just as passionate about his sometimes iconoclastic personal beliefs, be they political, religious, etc. This is evident from his sensitivity to contemporary social and human problems, and a case in point is his concern for Filipino migrant workers in Italy. He founded the Associazione Filipino Lavoratori en Italia (AFLI), which is credited with helping legalize the status of some 30,000 Filipinos. It was only fitting that President Fidel V. Ramos appointed him as the first sectoral representative of overseas workers in the House.

Nuns, bishop in the casino

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WHAT WERE THEY DOING THERE? HOW DID they get there? Who brought them there? Why were they there? What did they think their presence there would mean? Are they a new breed?

These were some of the questions asked by those who saw, on television, nuns trying out what looked like slot machines in the casino at the "Las Vegas"-to-be strip along Manila Bay.

Also present was Novaliches Bishop Antonio Tobias, who gave the occasion an ecclesiastical feel.

Even the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines didn't quite know how to react, but did react anyway by saying, through its spokesman Msgr. Pedro Quitorio, that the CBCP was not going to do anything, by way of censure perhaps, in relation to the presence of one its members in a gambling setting. Quitorio, however, did say that it was something the CBCP did not approve of.

Individual bishops are heads of their own ecclesiastical territories and are independent of the CBCP. They are accountable only to the Pope and their own constituencies. The most a bishop might get from his fellow bishops would be fraternal reminders. Individual bishops do not take orders from the CBCP except, perhaps, when, as members, they must take heed and act as a collegial body.

And what about the nuns? Although most, if not all, heads of religious congregations in the country are members of the Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (for women and men), these congregations are independent of the AMRSP and don't need the AMRSP's yes or no.

Now, I don't know if the nuns (I think they're called Servants of the Eucharist) who went to the casino had asked the approval of their Provincial Superior (their head in the country) or only of the head of their convent for this extraordinary activity. But that is a private, congregational matter.

What matters now is how these nuns' presence was interpreted and how they are now perceived by the public. Several seconds on television could say a lot. Would they have a chance to explain?

Their joyful presence in the gambling milieu could be interpreted as approval of the culture of gambling, and it does not matter that the milieu is mainly for tourists and Filipinos with a lot of extra money.

And how might they be perceived? The kindest thing I heard was that these nuns were, perhaps, naïve. And naïve, translated in Filipino, does not sound kind at all.

In this day and age when nuns, the Filipino variety in particular, continue to blaze trails in the Church and society, the word naïve cannot be used as a sweeping generalization to describe them.

During the early part of the martial-law years, it was the religious, the nuns among them, who were in the forefront. Not the mitered and sceptered members of the hierarchy some of whom preferred to first try out the so-called "critical collaboration" mode. In contrast, many nuns strode into the wilderness right away to search for the lost and the lifeless and give strength to those who feared for their lives. That was their defining moment, and they surely now have a place in the nation's history.

So, do we now make a stinging condemnation of some church persons' subtle approval of casinos through their presence? Maybe, a not-so-gentle reminder would do, a reminder urging them to be in the habit of using the brain, the heart, the gut. That already says a lot. To say more than that would be to presume they are stupid. And they are not.

As the Benedictine nun who conducted our short and sweet Lenten recollection two days ago said, "Use your *tantya*-meter."

In 1996, the CBCP came out with a statement on the proposed legalization of *jueteng*. It did not condemn gambling per se but judged gambling on the basis of its effects on people, even as it acknowledged the positive value of wholesome recreation done in moderation.

In 2000, Fr. Luis Hechanova, CSSR wrote in the INQUIRER an essay on gambling as a dilemma for both the Church and the State. (This was one of his essays in the book "Church, Politics and Transformation" that his friends published after he died in 2001.)

There are three aspects associated with gambling that influence its morality. These are recreation, addiction and excess.

Of gambling as recreation. "Catholic moral theology acknowledges the principle that the Good Lord has given human beings the opportunity of enjoying with moderation the little pleasures that accompany a normal human life. Thus, used with moderation, a game of cards or *mahjong* may be morally acceptable activities of persons and contribute to their relaxation and well-being."

I know of a handful of senior nuns from different places who come together once every few months to play canasta. No bets, of course, just laughter and updates on their joys and joints.

Of Gambling as addiction: "Unfortunately, many forms of gambling tend to be addictive. That is, people get hooked on excess. What is OK for some people as a form of recreation may not be good for those who get addicted and cannot stop."

As excess: "Certain forms of gambling involve not only thousands but millions of pesos. High stake *mahjong* (was) played in the presidential yacht … Not all pragmatic reasons are acceptable. They must be used, not primarily for some benefit to government or charitable institutions just for the sake of raising funds, but for the common good, especially in favor of the poor, as is done in most civilized countries of the world."

Even if, for the sake of argument, casino earnings went to some of Mother Teresa's charities, I doubt if the saintly nun would have liked to be caught on TV trying out the slot machines.

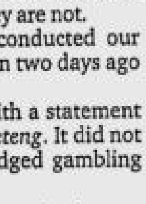
* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Amok with children

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III



AS I WRITE THIS, THE ATTENTION OF FILIPINOS everywhere—and indeed, the world—is telescoped on the lives of 32, then 31, children, two teachers, and the three people who have taken them hostage. Much has been said—and, surely, will continue to be said—on the ringleader of the hostage-takers, his actions, motivations and his tirades.

In the end, it doesn't matter why Jun Ducat took the children hostage. It only matters that he did—and that someone like him was given direct, personal responsibility over the kids. He has held people hostage before, press reports revealed; and however his previous hostage-taking had turned out (peacefully, apparently), I'm certainly not alone in thinking that such a record should be reason enough to disqualify him from taking charge of young students.

It's difficult to write this, without knowing how the whole thing would turn out. One can only hope that it ends up with no one being physically harmed, though life-long psychological trauma is clearly something that the kids and their families will have to contend with. Uncertainty over how it would all turn out also has made it difficult to listen to Ducat's rantings, whether in written reports or live over TV and the radio. The slightest hint of agreement with anything that he says is immediately jolting: doesn't agreement with anything he says mean accepting, even encouraging, what he's done? Is it possible, in such a monstrous situation, to even take the man's motivations as a factor that mitigate what he has done?

The grandmother of the boy released by the hostage-takers (because the child had a fever) was interviewed by Julius Babao and was remarkably sympathetic toward Ducat. She basically said she understood what Ducat did and she didn't really hold him in anger, because it was for the "good of generations yet to come." She then related what the media have been reporting all day long: Compared to most of us, Ducat has done more for the children of the poor.

What's going on, as I write this, is the real-life version of something that has been celebrated often enough on TV and in the movies: the *desperado* resorting to extreme measures when he comes to the conclusion that doing good will always be frustrated by those who do wrong. And so, he takes matters into his own hands and innocent people are put in danger, and yet even as everyone instinctively knows—including the *desperado* himself—that what's going on is wrong, a kind of grudging admiration of the man's breathtaking contempt for his own and others' safety comes into play. All because however muddled the motivations, however incoherent the statements, the *desperado* comes off saying—even doing—things that have crossed the minds of many ordinary people.

I suspect this kind of admiration—underscored by the kind of curiosity that impels us to slow down and take a closer look at accidents that we happen to pass by—comes with a kind of malicious public satisfaction. When someone armed with a cause—however delusional or muddled the manner in which he expresses that cause—manages to make the country stop and listen, and forces our officialdom to reason things out instead of brazening it out, it leads to a situation that, however artificial and forced its origins may be, is satisfying. What can the cops, with their swagger and their guns, really do? What can the politicians really accomplish? What use is power, when someone refuses to bow and scrape and, instead, holds the powerful and powerless alike in his thrall? At least temporarily.

The grandmother of the released child-hostage shrugged the incident off, even as the rest of us recoiled in horror and united in outrage, though the thought—that the hostage-taker said some things that, if not actually right, seemed to be at least true—keeps tugging at our conscience, keeps whispering in our ear, and ends up repeated, from time to time, under our breath. And then we ask ourselves what we really think, not only about what the hostage-takers have done, but why, and why we seem to have such markedly different values from both the hostage-takers and at least one member of the victims' families.

From Malacañang to Forbes Park to the shanties of the poor and to the more modest but firmly gated communities of the middle class—indeed, anywhere and everywhere that radio, TV and the Internet can reach a Filipino, whether at their place of work at home or abroad; whether the news reached us in the comfort of our homes, or in our places of work, or in Manila's gridlocked traffic (the result of the hostage crisis), the hostage-taking served as a sudden reminder of how we're part of a community; it was a kind of grand remonstrance, too, that for many of us there can be no condoning what has taken place, even as many others (could it be many more?) think that holding 31 children hostage is a defensible thing when the future of 145 day-care kids is on the line; that however it ends up, it could be, somehow, "beneficial for generations to come."

As I rush to finish this piece, not knowing what will happen in the end, news comes in: Amable Aguiluz pledges to give scholarships to the kids; this is in addition to pledges given by Senators Ramon Revilla Jr. and Alfredo Lim. The high and mighty, the wealthy and well-placed, falling over themselves to promise, promise, promise, what shouldn't have to be promised because it should be expected: a future for young kids. And what moral lesson do we derive from this ongoing drama? That a promise extracted at the point of a gun is worth the pointing of that gun at kids turned hostages? That having gone to such lengths, a promise will suffice; and that the only language we all speak in common is the language of the gun?

Wanted: volunteers

YOUNG BLOOD

Gideon V. Peña

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

"IT IS VERY EASY TO GIVE WHAT YOU HAVE IN EXCESS, but can you give what you need and what you want?"

This is the question one has to answer before one does volunteer work. At first I thought that it was easy to answer with a yes, but when supertyphoon "Reming" struck the Bicol Region and left us in darkness, literally and figuratively, I had second thoughts. However, when I thought of my responsibility, I joined the relief and rehabilitation operations of our university, called "Anduyog AQ: Tabang sa Tugang."

Anduyog AQ endeavored to help the victims of Reming by distributing relief goods, providing psycho-social therapy like stress debriefing and other services. I felt out of place in our group of volunteers because more than half were nursing students (nursing is the most popular course in our school). I kept asking myself, what is a political science student doing here? I did not know how to dress a wound; I actually hated to see the wounds of other people.

The first night that I had to sleep in the relief center, I felt very uncomfortable. There were no lights, no beddings, not even a good bed. The food we had was a foretaste of what we would be eating for the next few weeks: mostly overcooked rice and "*karninas*" a combination of "*karne*" (meat) and "*sardinas*" (sardines). That time, I thought of only one word: "agony." But when I remembered what I had seen when we went around Albay right after the typhoon, I stopped complaining. At least I have food to eat, I told myself. Having to walk under the blistering sun, to work until I was exhausted, to eat the kind of food I would not normally eat and to sleep without comfort hardly mattered anymore.

The days passed very quickly. Everything became routine: pack relief goods at night, then sleep. Wake up earlier than usual and eat instant noodles for breakfast. Distribute relief goods, take a bit of rest, take part in the feeding program. Eat dinner and jam with fellow volunteers.

Because we were together 24/7, I was unconsciously beginning to connect with the other volunteers. We developed our own vocabulary: "paksit" (a meaningless expression), "needles" ("noodles" mispronounced), "bip stick" (beef steak), tuna (sardines). To entertain ourselves, we spoofed some television shows, such as "Goin' Bulilit" and "Mr. Bean." One time we had some kind of cultural night with Father Mendez, O.P., our rector and president, and everyone had to showcase his talent. I felt like I belonged to the group.

When we went to Malinao, Albay, I met an old lady who came to get some relief goods. We were distributing five kilos of rice to every person. I knew the old lady could not carry her share. I asked her if she had a companion and she said she didn't have anyone with her. I then asked if she had money so she could take a ride home. She again answered with a no. I gave her some money for her fare.

All of a sudden, tears were rolling down her cheeks. "*Makasupog man. Ako na ngani an naghagad ki bagas, tinawan mo pa ako ki pamasahe* (I am so ashamed. Your group already gave me relief and still you gave me fare)," she told me.

A man who heard our exchange said it was nice of me to give the old lady some money because she lived several kilometers away from the relief center. He then asked, "Wasn't Aquinas battered by 'Reming'?"

I smiled and said, "Yes, Aquinas was battered, but not in spirit."

He then said, "Your school molds students into the best person that he can possibly be. Too bad I didn't finish my studies there because of poverty. I hope and I pray that many children can go there. But I guess it will only be a dream. We barely have enough money for food. We don't have some extra money for education."

I felt as if cold water had been splashed on my face. I had been wondering what a political science student was doing in a relief operation and I had found the answer: to see the depressing condition of our country.

Now I am frightened. Four months have passed since Reming devastated our region and the rehabilitation work is far from complete. And another supertyphoon threatens to devastate us once again. This time it's no longer natural. It's man-made and it's called elections.

Relief operations are still going on in Albay, and it's all because national and local politicians want to promote their own selfish ambitions. They distribute goods on board trucks covered with their pictures on tarpaulins. They claim to be the messiah who will deliver the people from their misery. They promise to attend to their needs for food and clothing and teach them to be dependent on them.

Some of them are actually the same politicians who had promised to provide education to the man I met in Malinao, and maybe thousands of others. Perhaps they have forgotten it or they have no time for it because they are too busy helping themselves. They would never give anything without pictures being taken as they embrace the poor victims, their very own victims. They will do anything and say anything just so people will write their names on the ballot.

Albay only needs time to be rehabilitated physically. On the other hand, our country needs more than just time. What our country needs in order to achieve peace and economic progress is a psychosocial, political and moral rehabilitation.

For this we do not need politicians. What we need are political volunteers.

Gideon V. Peña, 17, is an Anduyog AQ Volunteer and a second year Bachelor of Arts Major in Political Science student at the Aquinas University of Legazpi, Rawis, Legazpi City.

2007 is for Remembering Ramon Magsaysay

100

"The role of the government is to tap the creative energies of our people and to provide the means by which their desire for improvement can be translated into permanent benefits."

—President Ramon Magsaysay's State of the Nation Address, Jan. 24, 1955

* * *

"I have been criticized for flying too much, for going to the rural areas too often, and for receiving hundreds of callers every day… (but I am like a doctor)… I do not want to treat my patient by remote control… I feel uneasy in a swivel chair."

—President Ramon Magsaysay speaks before a medical convention (undated)

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The 'lynching' of the legal Left

WHAT ACTUALLY HAS TRANspired since Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo assumed the presidency in 2001? The attention being given the armed revolution now is starkly disproportionate to its activities these past six years. Through these years, the activities of the legal Left and its increasing participation in public life and discourse were evidently on the rise.

This resurgence of the Left in the Philippines is not an isolated phenomenon. It is a global trend that is particularly sweeping Central and South America. But why this sudden "lynching" of the so-called communists and the broad Left community in the Philippines in a fashion reminiscent of the "Indonesian Solution"?

One reason could be the widely perceived "illegitimacy" of the present government, personified by those implicated in the "Hello Garci" scandal—from GMA to her generals, among them the two Hermogeneses (Esperon and Ebdane). The Arroyo administration would like to shift the public eye from her government's illegitimacy to "communist terrorism," from "Hello Garci" to "Ka Satur," from military involvement in the 2004 electoral fraud to the NPA (New People's Army) "killing fields." This is the work of spin doctors out to prolong the life of a mortally wounded regime.

Another reason could be the leftist legislators themselves, together with the broad Left in the parliament of the streets. They are the most credible, organized and formidable political force that can, at anytime, light up another congressional and popular uprising. Unlike the "off-and-on" traditional political opposition and civil society, the Left cannot be cowed or tamed.

Thus, an emphasis on the "terrorism" of the Left, an allegation debunked by the Alston and Melo reports, is a wily spin that put leftist democrats on the defensive. A third reason, and most hideous of all: the military needs to up the ante on counterinsurgency to take the Arroyo administration out of the spotlight. It is not about the military genuinely wanting to put an end to the insurgency (which is its source of booty), it is about propping up a civilian administration that it can control and manipulate.

This partly explains the government's and the AFP/PNP's murderous campaign against leftist activists; the intensifying militarization of the countryside, urban poor communities and school campuses; the harassment of Ocampo, Crispin Beltran and other leftist leaders; and the anti-communist hysteria of the two Gonzalezes (Raul and Norberto).

The Commission on Elections and the Commission on Human Rights? They are there to lend a hand to fraudsters and butchers.

—REV. DR. FERDINAND ANNO,
Theology and Religious Studies,
The University of Leeds,
Leeds LS2 9JT

LETTERS

Corrupt laughing at honest officials

I AM A GSIS PENSIONER. WITH the price of everything going up, what kind of future lies ahead of us? I am referring to retired government employees who dedicated the best years of their lives serving the government with dedication, loyalty and above all, honesty.

The corrupt ones may be laughing at us because we didn't steal anything from the government to enrich ourselves. Our only consolation is our belief that God is up there, documenting everything.

Remember, we, retirees are not dead yet. We also deserve what the active and younger government employees are enjoying under the retirement law.

—ELIZABETH C. MACALALAD,
17 Road 1, Project 6, QC

Inaccurate photo caption: A case of hitting the wrong Mike?

THE FRONT-PAGE PHOTO (INQUIRER, 3/22/07) showed a picture of a galvanized iron wall in Bohol with torn posters of senatorial candidates. With the caption, "Violated landscape" (I wasn't aware that galvanized iron or "yero" fences were already considered landscape), the photo caption indicated that the wall or fence was defaced by the posters of Mike Defensor.

The caption also cried "Attention Comelec" to the supposed irregularity committed by Defensor's camp. On close inspection of the photo, it can be clearly seen that the torn posters belonged to several candidates including Butch Pichay, Ed Angara, Joker Arroyo and others. (Some posters were no longer identifiable.)

Yes, Defensor's posters were indeed included in the bunch. But I was bothered by the seemingly biased attempt to blame the supposed "violation" on Defensor's camp alone.

I have for years been a subscriber of the INQUIRER for its supposed adherence to balanced news. Now, I am beginning to wonder about this claim. Surely, the photographer or person in charge of putting the caption must have clearly seen that the other posters in the photo did **not** belong to Defensor.

Last week, Defensor was on TV stating that there seems to be a concerted effort to damage his campaign because, based on the latest surveys, he is already inside the Magic 12 circle of winning senatorial candidates.

This is, of course, normal and expected from his political opponents. But from the INQUIRER?

Does this have something to do with the case of Mike Arroyo against the INQUIRER and the arrest of the INQUIRER staff? Is the INQUIRER hitting the wrong Mike?

—ALAN D. R. DE LUZURIAGA,
adluzuriaga@gmail.com

Our correspondent in Bohol only noted Mike Defensor's posters, and no other. The INQUIRER trusts its people on the ground. And we take their word for it. As to damaging Defensor's campaign, hey, the INQUIRER was the first to discern and extol the idea of Defensor as a promising, young legislator. We wish him well.—Ed.

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Publication doesn't make rumor true

OTHER THAN A SPRAINED ELbow, I am very much alive—contrary to the rumors earlier circulated by our political opponents in Makati. I would like to emphasize that I was not, and never have been, physically assaulted by anyone, most especially not by my father—something that Conrado Banal III insinuated in his column last March 15.

I had, as I said, expected our political opponents to concoct all sorts of stories regarding my accident for their selfish political ends. What I did not expect was to read one of their spins in the pages of a respectable newspaper like the INQUIRER—in a business column, of all places!

I slipped and fell on my face. Yes, it was unglamorous and totally bereft of drama. The accident happened on March 12 while I was walking down the driveway of my place at around 9 a.m. There was never any shouting match or altercation between my dad and myself. I have witnesses to prove this, and Banal is free to interview them, if he is even remotely interested.

Banal also cited his conveniently unnamed source as saying that based on Makati Med records, I was admitted at 1 a.m.; I was admitted on March 12 at 10:14 a.m. and I have my medical certificate from Makati Med to attest to this.

Banal hinted that my father was responsible for my "physical trauma." My father is a gentle and loving father. We grew up in a loving and nurturing family. It may sound corny in this day and age, but I love my parents, and they love us in return. We do have our share of *tampuhan* in the family, but whatever petty issues we may have, inflicting physical pain has never been our way of resolving them.

I may not be a journalist, but I know that journalists are supposed to verify stories before writing them. Labeling a story a "rumor" and then reprinting it do not remove the fact that it is still a rumor, unverified, of unknown provenance and in most cases—as in this one—clearly false and obviously malicious. It also does not exculpate the writer from his obligation to be responsible enough to verify the "rumor" before hurting people.

In my case, the physical pain has passed. Now, I need to come to terms with the emotional pain inflicted by a reckless display of political rumor-mongering by an otherwise respected business columnist.

—ABIGAIL S. BINAY,
Makati City

Shaky premise on OSG's 'meddling'

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO THE editorial "Small-fry justice" (INQUIRER, 3/11/07) which suggested that there are two types of justice in our country—one "for the poor and uninfluential"; and another one for "the rich, the well-counseled, the powerful." While that may appear to be so in certain cases, I believe that the editorial's premise was shaky at best.

The premise was the perceived "contrast" between the position taken by the Office of the Solicitor General which supported the pending appeal of former Mindoro Occidental Rep. Jose Villarosa, on one hand, and the Sandiganbayan's conviction of three former officials of Anahawan, Southern Leyte for graft and falsification of documents, on the other.

The editorial hinted that the latter case prospered because the accused "are decidedly out of power, out of favor, out of the loop"; while Villarosa remains "a powerful figure in his province" and his wife is an incumbent member of the House of Representatives and a staunch ally of the President. Then, the editorial's unspoken, or unwritten, premise—that the trial judge who convicted Villarosa is infallible, and the OSG has no legal or moral right to support an appeal questioning the decision.

The editorial overlooked the similarity (the Anahawan officials and Villarosa were convicted at the first instance) as well as the obvious contrast (the Anahawan officials were convicted after they "are decidedly out of power, out of favor, out of the loop"; Villarosa was convicted even as he remains "a powerful figure in his province").

I don't know any of the parties in those cases. I was driven to write this letter because the editorial charged the OSG with "lawyering" for the rich and powerful. This is far from the truth. Also, the editorial ignored the fact that under the 1987 Administrative Code, the OSG is mandated to "act and represent the Republic and/or the people before any court, tribunal, body or commission in any matter, action or proceedings which, in his opinion, affects the welfare of the people as the ends of justice may require." This, INQUIRER reporters Jocelyn Uy and Leila Salaverria acknowledged in their report last March 10.

I know whereof I speak when I say that the insinuation that the OSG acts favorably only for the rich and powerful is false. In a petition I filed before the Supreme Court way back in 1990, I questioned a policy of the Civil Service Commission. The OSG, then headed by Frank Chavez, initially supported the CSC's position. However, in its last pleading, the OSG turned around and adopted a position that favored mine. Suffice it to say that the Supreme Court en banc eventually, and unanimously, ruled in my favor. (Peralta vs CSC, GR No. 95832, 212 SCRA 425)

I was just a mere government employee then. I was neither rich nor powerful, but the OSG supported my position then, because it was the legal and moral thing to do.

—MAYNARD R. PERALTA,
maynard_888@yahoo.com

Meralco keeps to power reform law

THIS REFERS TO CENON MAKAlinao's letter titled "IPP rates should be lower than Napocor's." (INQUIRER, 3/22/07)

He questioned Meralco's alleged buying from the IPPs (independent power producers) even when Napocor's price was lower. Makalinao should understand the intricacies of the costs involved in buying power from the generators. Just because a generator sells its power at a lower cost does not mean that a distribution firm should automatically buy from it. Associated transmission charges should also be taken into account. If he includes these charges and adds the difference for generation and transmission costs, he will see that Meralco's IPP purchased power cost comes out cheaper.

In comparing Napocor and IPP rates, Makalinao should also understand something about fixed and variable costs. Meralco's contracts with the IPPs (typical to most IPP contracts, including those of Napocor) have both fixed and variable cost components. Sourcing power solely from Napocor does not free Meralco from paying the fixed costs attendant to the contracts. That is the reason why Meralco has pushed for the dispatch of the IPPs at no less than contract levels or the minimum energy quantity (MEQ).

We need not emphasize that a lower generation cost is achieved if the fixed cost is spread over a greater number of kilowatt-hours, which will result to lower rates for consumers. Cost minimization is attained by displacing the higher variable cost of one supplier with the lower variable cost of another supplier. With Meralco's IPPs running at MEQ levels, there will definitely be a reduction in Meralco's rates.

Makalinao likewise alluded to the revision of Meralco's contract with Napocor in 2001. The settlement was a solution designed to benefit all parties: For Napocor, it assured steady cash inflows in addition to the regular revenues it gets from Meralco. For Meralco, it removed a factor of uncertainty in its regulatory environment and improved its chances of accessing financing in the international bond market. Lastly, it settled a very contentious matter that could derail the restructuring and privatization efforts of the government in the power sector, with its dire effects on the budget deficit and the economy as a whole.

Makalinao also contended that system loss should be part of the distribution cost. As we have explained before, the collection of system loss charge up to 9.5 percent is provided for by RA 7832; Meralco shoulders any amount beyond this 9.5 percent cap. In 2006 alone, Meralco shouldered P1.9 billion in system losses.

Finally, Makalinao questioned the imposition of supply and metering charges and said, "the ERC and Meralco invoke Epira as basis for lopsided billings and unmitigated self-dealing." We would no longer wish to dignify this comment. Suffice it to say that Meralco merely abides by what the law states.

—ELPI O. CUNA JR.,
vice president and director,
Corporate Communication,
Meralco, Pasig City

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'Reming' survivors still crying for help

By Ephraim Aguilar
Daraga, Albay

IT WAS ALMOST DUSK AND THE crisp, cool air outside the tents pitched in the grounds of the elementary school in the village of Tagas, Daraga, Albay, provided a welcome relief to Arlene Llorca.

Intermittent rains had forced the 44-year-old woman to stay inside her dwelling and endure the heat while she embroidered a woven bag.

A handicraft worker, Llorca and her family of six had occupied one of the classrooms in December last year. Lahar brought down by Supertyphoon "Reming" from Mount Mayon buried her house a few days before. They moved to one of the tents when classes resumed in January after a month's suspension.

A neighbor, Amelia Quinalayo, 48, was not as "lucky." She shares a tent with two to three other families.

"It's hard to live with other families in one tent. Our children always get sick with colds or fever because of too much heat. Rainwater also drips inside our tents on rainy days," Quinalayo lamented.

Like most of the other 471 families (2,127 people) from the two zones in Tagas who have been encamped in 47 other tents and 165 shanties, Llorca and Quinalayo have no choice but to adjust to their new environment—or what disaster officials call "temporary shelters."

Almost four months after "Reming" struck the village, almost 300,000 families still live in these conditions.

Local government officials had told Llorca and Quinalayo that it would take two years before permanent relocation sites could be established. But Med Villanueva, liaison officer of Ayuda Albay, which oversees relief and rehabilitation efforts, said the period was merely an "optimistic" assumption.

Ayuda Albay, which was created through Executive Order 2007-1 of the provincial government to address the long-term needs of the typhoon survivors, has counted on the expertise and resources of over 27 member-organizations from the international non-government sector, which have been working in the cluster areas of shelter, food, education, livelihood, health, logistics and transport, and evacuation and transit center.

Gap in donations

One of the main problems they face is the acute lack of NGO help. "Many have given support but many are also pulling out one by one," said Villanueva.

Regarding the survivors' shelter needs, much "*ayuda*" (Bicol term for help) needs to be done immediately and the government needs to move fast, she said.

A study conducted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha) from Feb. 5 to March 2 showed that the local Red Cross and other agencies had resettled families in only 6.9 percent or 21,357 housing units of the 309,518 destroyed houses. This meant a "significant" gap of 288,161 housing units.

The UN country team is crying out for being "under-funded."

IOM plans

The International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is part of the UN team, plans to decongest 13 schools still being used as evacuation centers.

"There is a pressing need to decongest these shelters. We hope to move the people out of the tents and build temporary houses for them while they wait for the permanent ones being built by the government and other organizations. This is also to mitigate health issues in congested camps," said Ida Mae Fernandez, IOM project officer.

Fernandez said the group was looking for public land to be leased for them to build temporary shelters. The UN team, she said, had been working through a special consolidated fund of $42 million, of which 25 percent was already spent for emergency relief (the first stage of disaster response) and 75 percent was being used for early recovery programs.

Albay not OK

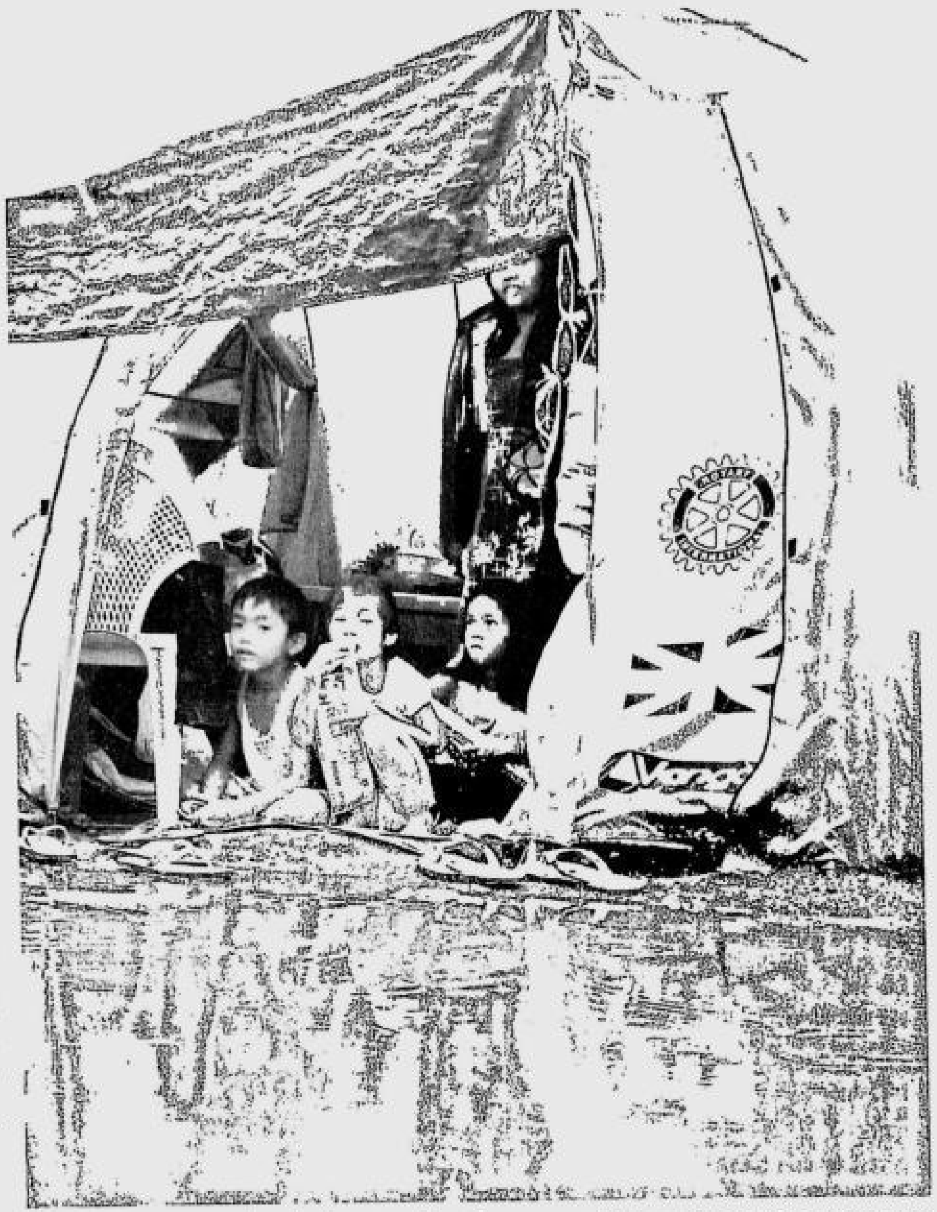
"We are in need of additional funds. We, in the IOM, need $1 million more to rearrange and rebuild the congested camps and provide some livelihood for the people," she said.

The IOM now operates on a $250,000 (P1.24 million) grant from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund and a 550,000-Euro (P36-million) funding from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office.

It mainly offers logistics and transport to other organizations and donors who do not have the capacity to carry their goods to Bicol.

"We are in need of more funds for recovery. If we do not get funds for livelihood and shelter of thousands of people, what can we look forward to?" Villanueva said.

"Everyone thinks Albay is OK and is springing back to life. But the truth is, we are not any closer to recovery. We still need help. And we make sure that help is directly brought to its intended beneficiaries."



RAINWATER surrounding their tent confines these young victims of Supertyphoon "Reming" in Daraga town in Albay. Some evacuees have complained that water drips inside their tents during heavy rains.

PHOTOS BY EPHRAIM AGUILAR

ARLENE Llorca, 44, one of those living in the "tent city" at the Tagas Elementary School in Daraga town in Albay embroiders bags for a living.

4 UP Los Baños teachers publish own literary works

By Niña Catherine Calleja
Los Baños, Laguna

BEING A CREATIVE WRITER does not end with the last line of a poem or the ending of a short story. The next step is getting the work published—which could be daunting—as there are a few established publishing houses in the country that take chances on new titles.

Four humanities teachers went against this reality by publishing their own literary works at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB).

Dennis Aguinaldo, Emmanuel Dumlao, Reagan Maiquez and Carlos Piocos III said that through their collection of poems and prose, "Kuwatro o Kuwarto," they could inspire student writers to pursue publication.

Launched on Feb. 28, the collection was intended to be read by the students and other sectors in UPLB.

"We want to have an extension of what we can offer to students in writing courses. The problem is the 'bridge' of the writing products of our students," Aguinaldo said in a group interview.

"Kuwarto o Kuwatro" is a comic gossip that pertains to a professor giving students two choices, whether to have sex with the teacher or accept a grade of 4.0 or incomplete.

"The title is familiar with the students and we just want it to be intriguing to them," Aguinaldo said.

Third World writers

Being a writer in a Third World country is difficult, he said. "Filipino writers must realize that the publishing system here is different from that in the First World countries where publishers have agents constantly looking for writers."

"Here, in a standard publication, the pace of selling 1,000 copies of books is very slow. If you think solely of profit, you can not write," he added.

Piocos said his group had looked for ways to offer their work to readers. "The idea that a writer must only publish in recognized press journals should not impede [him or her]."

Aguinaldo said the students would be able to see other possible ways of publishing and that every option had its tradeoffs and gains.

After about 200 copies of the collection were released, the four are thinking of a reprint.

"We know that these could not enter bookstores but through these 200 copies, we can showcase our work in our own community," said Aguinaldo.

Although they did not wait for known publishers and editors, these works passed rigorous editing through workshops, he said. "Like any publication, we wanted quality output."

Originally, the authors planned to publish a photocopied literary magazine. But when they discovered a printing press which charged lower payment, they grabbed the opportunity. They said they would welcome chances of wide publishing schemes in the future.

One of their objectives in self-publishing was to produce a book that UP students, employees and workers can afford, Aguinaldo said. "Book stores add 30 to 40 percent to the original price of the book, so how can your expect it to reach the students, farmers and workers?" he said.

At a cost of only P80, copies of the book were already bought by 20 UPLB workers, he said, "partly by chance and partly by choice."

"We want this book to reach the public at less cost for them. Public awareness can progress without being shackled by commercial concerns," he said.

Workshops

Dumlao said the book was also an opportunity to bare oneself to the students.

"Hopefully, it can spark an academic discourse in literature here. This is the opportunity for students to review the works of the teachers who teach them strong and weak points in literary pieces," he said.

The collection is also an extension of the weekly writing workshops that they have been conducting with student organizations such as UPLB Writers' Club, Layb, and Pantas.

These groups would market the books and the profit generated would go directly to their organizations.

For almost five years now, Dumlao has been conducting free poetry workshops with the other three teachers eventually joining him.

"In terms of content, we discuss the political correctness of the craft. We talk about almost everything like politics, revolution, and gender issues," Dumlao said.

Passion urges them to facilitate student workshops, he said.

He admitted that it is difficult to promote literature in a science community like UPLB. "But this book and the enthusiastic organizations we work with prove that this community could also be a literary community," he said.

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Bloodshed looms in ARMM polls

PARANG, SHARIFF KABUNSUAN—Authorities are trying to prevent further bloodshed in the fight for a mayoral position in Lanao del Sur following the killing of one aspirant allegedly by his rival.

Zaldy Ampatuan, governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, said the killing of Saum Dipatuan allegedly by his cousin Kairudin on Sunday could fuel further violence in the town of Bacolod-Calawi, Lanao del Sur.

Dipatuan was seeking to replace his brother, incumbent Mayor Tatad Dipatuan.

Ampatuan asked the regional police to hunt Kairudin, chief of the town's militia.

Officials said Kairudin was angered when he learned that the mayor had already anointed Saum to replace him.

Kairudin tried to ask Saum to give way to his candidacy, but he shot Saum in the process.

Ampatuan urged Lanao del Sur leaders to bring the relatives to a dialogue and peacefully resolve the issue.

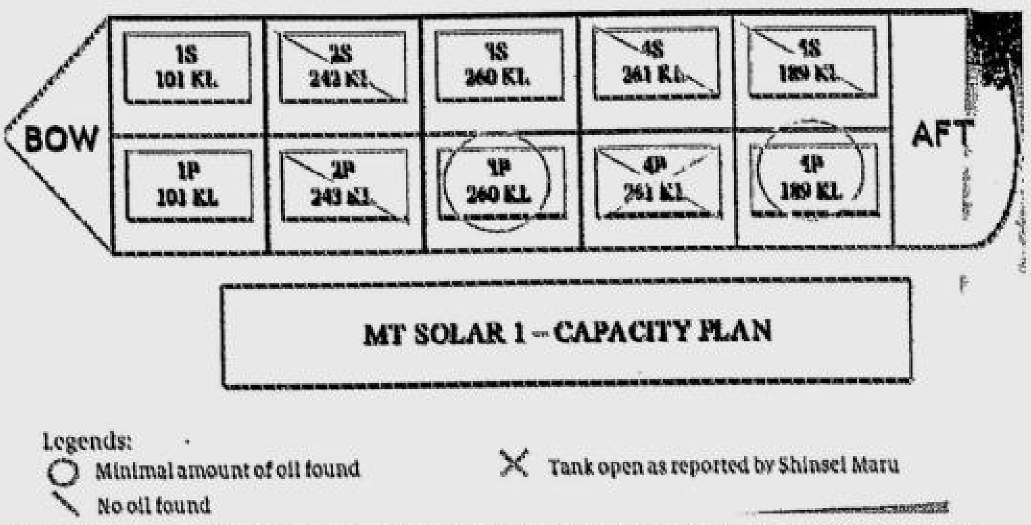
The killing was the third election-related case of violence recorded in the region this month alone.

On Thursday last week, unidentified gunmen also ambushed and seriously injured three people in South Upi, Maguindanao, including the town's secretary. *Edwin O. Fernandez and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

Recovery of oil from Solar I shows 2M liters already spilled

By Carla Gomez and Nestor Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE MT SOLAR I SPILLED CLOSE to two million liters of bunker fuel when it sank off the coast of Guimaras Island in August last year, not just 350,000 liters as initially thought.



A DIAGRAM provided by Petron shows the tanks that were found empty of oil in Solar I. The recovery effort is yielding results that show most of the oil had already been spilled into the seas of Guimaras. Petron, however, said the cleanup is already complete.

The volume officially makes the Aug. 11, 2006 oil spill the worst in the country's history followed by the December 2005 oil spill off Semirara Island, which involved more than 300,000 liters of bunker fuel.

Officials involved in the oil recovery operation reached this conclusion yesterday after they found that at least five tanks on board the Solar I were empty, according to Carlos Tan, the health, safety and environment officer of Petron Corp.

As of yesterday, 9 of the 10 tanks, which were supposed to contain 2.2 million liters of oil on board the tanker, were opened by the Allied Shield, a vessel tasked with retrieving oil from the sunken vessel, and only 5,000 liters of oil were found in them, Tan said.

With only one more tank to open, Tan said it was believed that the bulk of the oil cargo spilled out but he gave assurance that the cleanup of the oil that hit the coast of Guimaras had already been completed.

Rafael Coscolluela, presidential assistant for Western Visayas and the spokesperson of the regional Task Force Solar I Oil Spill (TF SOS), confirmed that a minimal amount of bunker fuel was found inside the wreck of the Solar I lying 639 meters underwater 9 miles south of the island province of Guimaras.

"It appears that most of the oil was already released at the height of the oil spill," Coscolluela told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Coscolluela said the nine cargo tanks accessed by the operation had minimal amount of bunker fuel or were empty.

The total amount of oil recovered 16 days into the operation reached only around five cubic meters. The amount is not even enough to fill up the shuttle that transports the recovered oil underwater to the Allied Shield ship on the surface hovering over the site of the wreck, said Coscolluela.

Solar I has 10 cargo compartments with five on each side of the ship. Each compartment has an average capacity of 200,000 liters or a total of 2.195 million liters.

Solar I was carrying 2.1 million liters of oil owned by Petron Corp. when it sank amid stormy weather. Previous Coast Guard estimates on the remaining bunker fuel left inside Solar I were from 250,000 liters to 300,000 liters.

The oil spill wrought destruction on 27 villages in the towns of Nueva Valencia, Sibunag, San Lorenzo, Jordan and Buenavista in Guimaras and in the towns of Sara, Concepcion and Oton in Iloilo. It also reached the coastal villages of Iloilo City.

It brought hardships to 6,156 families or 30,531 persons, mostly fishermen who lost their livelihood.

The island's rich marine resources were also devastated with 239 km of coastline, 15.8 sq km of coral reefs, 105 hectares of mangroves and 42 ha of seaweeds damaged or destroyed.

Hundreds of residents were stricken with pulmonary diseases at the height of the oil spill and were evacuated from their homes after the oil sludge reach their shores.

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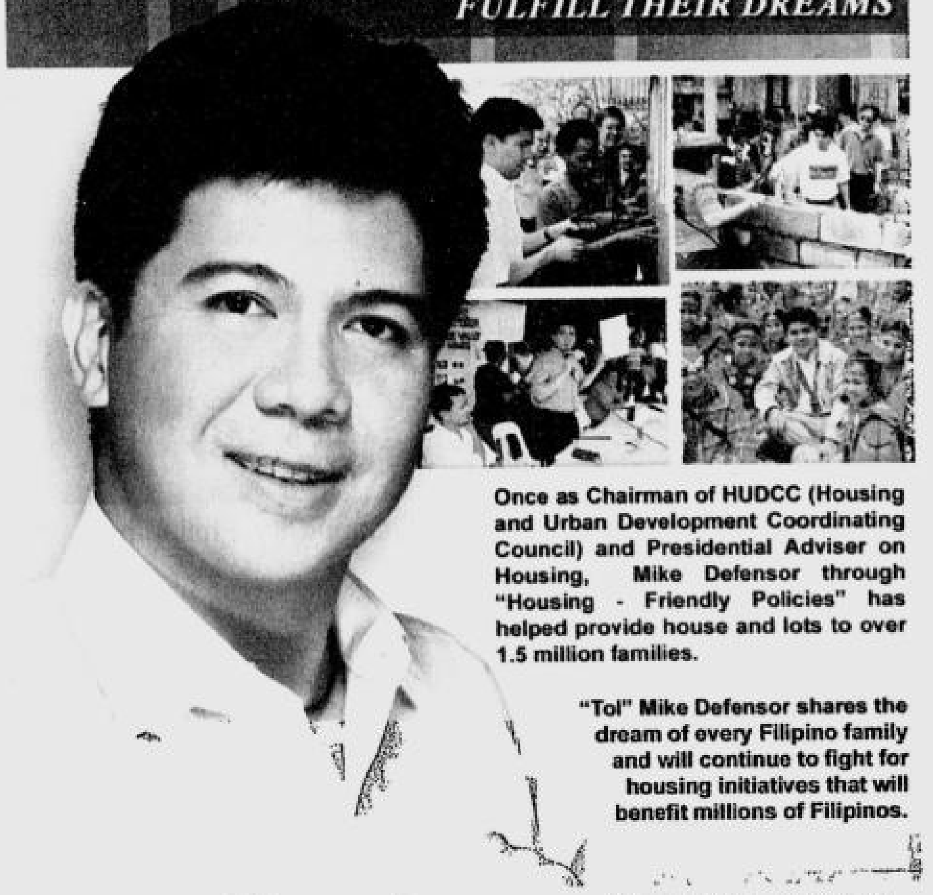

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3 kisses seal Ricky, Vilma partnership

LIPA CITY—ACTRESS VILMA SANTOS made her entry into the gubernatorial race of Batangas official yesterday, filing her certificate of candidacy and literally kissing what could have been the biggest obstacle to her bid—brother-in-law Ricky Recto's ambition to become governor—goodbye.

Vilma and Ricky met at the local office of the Comelec to file their COCs, she for governor while he for congressman of the province's fourth district, a fallback position that he had to take after it became apparent that Vilma was bent on running.

Vilma and Ricky hugged each other and kissed on the lips.

The first kiss was made at the city hall here, the second before they proceeded to Batangas City to file their COCs, and the third after they filed their COCs.

It was a gesture of reconciliation made to the delight of spectators that included Vilma's husband, Ralph, younger brother of Ricky, and made weeks after Ricky acted defiant and said he won't back down while Vilma bid for more time to decide.

"I'm speechless. I didn't expect [Ricky] to be here. I don't have any idea that he was coming," Santos said.

"My prayers are now answered. I feel light emotionally and mentally. This is a great way to start the campaign. So, let's go!"

Wearing a red blazer, Santos was warmly greeted by city hall employees and supporters when she arrived at the city hall grounds at around 8:30 a.m.

She attended Mass held on the same stage where she declared at first that she was deep in prayers over whether or not to run for governor on March 5.

Surprise

"I still feel nervous but now I will file my candidacy. I hope you will use your right to vote (intelligently)," she said, addressing the crowd that gathered at the city hall to cheer her.

After Mass, Vilma was escorted to her office at the second floor of the city hall.

A few minutes after, the Recto brothers emerged from the crowd.

Ricky said aside from his brother Ralph, nobody knew of his plan to appear at the city hall and file his COC with Vilma.

"This came as a surprise even for me," he said.

In a press briefing, Santos said she would do for Batangas what she had done for Lipa.

"I cannot promise heaven and earth because my resources as governor are also limited. But I will try my best to serve the province," she said.

She said among her program priorities are job generation, health, education, peace and order, tourism and infrastructure. *Marlon Ramos and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

ACTRESS Vilma Santos and brother-in-law Ricky Recto hug and kiss as they filed their certificates of candidacy together, to the delight of spectators, including Vilma's husband Ralph, Ricky's younger brother. EDWIN BACASMAS

Another Arroyo son files bid for House seat

PILI CAMARINES SUR—ANOTHER OF PRESIdent Macapagal-Arroyo's son filed a certificate of candidacy for congressman representing the first district of Camarines Sur, where he bought a house to qualify for public office there.

Diosdado Ignacio Jose Maria "Dato" M. Arroyo led a motorcade of other candidates to the Comelec office here.

Dato and his entourage converged at San Fernando town, hometown of his lone opponent, Sabas Mabulo.

Another son of the President, Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, accompanied Dato, his younger brother.

They led 120 other candidates from the 10 towns of Camarines Sur in the motorcade.

The towns in the first district include San Fernando, Minalabac, Pamplona, Pasacao, Libmanan, Ragay, Lupi, Del Gallego, Cabusao and Sipocot. Dato's district has 189,822 voters with his town residence the biggest with 41,734 voters.

Dato transferred from Ateneo de Manila University to Ateneo de Naga University. He graduated in October 1998 with a degree in Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Legal Management.

Dato stayed in Naga City for four years from 1994 to 1998 and became articulate in the native dialect.

When his mother won the presidential race in 2004, he decided to make his residence here. He first rented a house in San Felipe, Naga City, then in late 2005 he built a house in Potot, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Bong Pineda wife vows to stop 'jueteng'

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Board Member Lilia Pineda on Wednesday filed her certificate of candidacy for governor of Pampanga, vowing to stop graft and corruption as well as the illegal numbers game jueteng, which her husband, Rodolfo or Bong, is suspected of operating.

Pineda, 56, made known her plan to stop jueteng as reporters asked her for reactions to the anti-corruption and anti-illegal gambling platform of another rival, Fr. Eddie Panlilio.

"That platform is good. We want to do the same thing. To stop graft and corruption, to study how to eradicate jueteng are good efforts," she said, standing next to reelectionist Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao, her running mate.

Alternative employment

Jueteng existed because those employed in it needed money to survive, she said, adding that the illegal numbers game was the answer to their health and education needs.

"They need alternative employment," Pineda said, without saying how many people in Pampanga were employed in jueteng.

It was the first time that she declared such a thrust. In past interviews, she said the illegal game had stopped and that the government-regulated small town lottery (STL) took its place. Her husband had denied running STL in Pampanga and Bataan.

LUBAO town, the Pinedas' and President Macapagal-Arroyo's hometown, is festooned with streamers of greetings for the recent birthday of Lilia Pineda. INQUIRER PHOTO

According to police sources, Bong Pineda has operated jueteng in Pampanga since 1986, spreading the enterprise as well to other Luzon provinces. The business was known to have stopped in 1986 due to a congressional inquiry and in 2000 during the "Juetengate" scandal that ousted Joseph Estrada from the presidency.

Fr. Marius Roque, who leads the Pampanga archdiocese's campaign against illegal gambling, doubted Pineda's statements.

"She has to show that through action. She has been spreading a lot of money, giving as much as P500 to students, teachers and drivers. She has given away a lot of money and she would get that back through jueteng," Roque told reporters in Guagua town.

In a phone interview, Pineda said that in her 19 years in public office, she has not used money to get votes or win.

In Pangasinan, more candidates rushed to the Commission on Elections office in Dagupan City on Wednesday to file their COCs as they deemed March 28 a lucky day based on a native chart.

Some candidates said they decided to file their COCs after consulting with the *lunario* (derived from lunar or pertaining to the moon), a chart which focuses on lucky dates and is similar to the Chinese feng shui.

Old Pangasinan residents consult the lunario before they make big decisions like when to build a house, to travel, to open a business or run for public office.

Rep. Amado Espino Jr. filed his COC for governor on March 28 because the *lunario* deemed it to be luckier. "That's a factor," he said.

The color red was also the dominant color among candidates who filed their COCs on Wednesday.

Other candidates who filed their COCs on Wednesday were Rep. Conrado Estrella III in the sixth congressional district, Rep. Arthur Celeste and retired Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza in the first district, and former Citizens Battle Against Corruption party-list Rep. Kim Bernardo-Lokin in the second district.

Lokin will face outgoing Pangasinan Gov. Victor Agbayani.

10 members

In Abra, Eustaquio "Kit" Bersamin, brother of slain Abra Rep. Luis Bersamin Jr., filed his COC for Abra governor. He is expected to meet reelectionist Gov. Vicente Valera.

Lagayan Mayor Cecilia Luna will run for the lone congressional district seat against Valera's wife, Bangued Mayor Ma. Zita Claustro-Valera.

In La Union,. more than 10 members of the Ortega family will run for various positions in the province. Leading the family's candidates is outgoing Gov. Victor Ortega, who filed his COC for representative of the first district.

With reports from Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon, and Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Gabriel Cardinoza, Frank Cimatu and Hanna Lacsamana, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Bet bids bye to priest duties to enter gov race

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

ELEKSYON 2007

GUAGUA, PAMPANGA—A CATHOlic priest running for governor in Pampanga celebrated Mass for the last time on Wednesday, bade goodbye to his parishioners here and rallied Kapampangans to end the "moral crisis" in the province.

"This morning I kissed my priestly robe goodbye. I am temporarily leaving the priesthood to lead our crusade against graft and corruption, illegal gambling and other forms of moral decay," Fr. Eddie Panlio said in his homily.

He led five priests in celebrating the Mass at the St. James Cathedral in Betis, his parish.

Many Mass goers were seen shedding or holding back their tears.

The parish pastoral council president, Soc Cayanan, said Panlilio left a legacy of uniting the parishioners and mobilizing them to serve the poorest in the parish.

Panlilio, 56, said he initially rejected clamors for him to run but decided to pursue his bid when he learned that candidates were buying off voters among the youth.

"That stirred fear in me," he said.

Echoing that day's Gospel that truth sets people free, he said: "The time has come that we must all stand up for truth."

After Mass, he proceeded to a nearby gymnasium to announce his gubernatorial bid.

"I am accepting the challenge to be the people's alternative candidate for the governorship of this province," he told some 1,000 supporters who came, bringing handmade posters and food.

"I love my ministry and I find much fulfillment in it. Perhaps, it is out of this love that I am heeding the call to a greater expression of my ministry," he said.

He confirmed the "long and agonizing process of discernment" that sources in the local Roman Catholic Church said was filled with many efforts to stop him.

"I have made a great sacrifice in heeding this call. And I now also ask you to make the sacrifice—to once again accompany me in this journey," Panlilio said.

He told reporters that Archbishop Paciano Aniceto has yet to give his consent to his request for a leave of absence from priestly duties.

Baguilat files new bid to reclaim Ifugao post

FORMER IFUGAO GOV. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. is out to reclaim his old seat.

The 40-year-old Baguilat filed his certificate of candidacy on March 16 and told the INQUIRER he was ready to hit the campaign trail and hopefully win the gubernatorial race despite his lack of funds.

Baguilat, during the "Lugao para sa Ifugao" gathering at the Conspiracy Bar in Quezon City last week, said he was riding on a platform of fighting corruption to rehabilitate the rice terraces; putting up a trading post to promote Ifugao products, including organically produced rice and vegetables; and improving Ifugao's roads.

He said he would also work to increase the Ifugaos' income, protect their rich indigenous culture and install renewable energy systems to provide people with power with minimum impact on the province's fragile ecosystem.

Baguilat was governor of Ifugao from 2001 to 2004 during which he was given a Dangal ng Bayan award and received various international awards, such as the Panibagong Paraan from multilateral financing institutions.

His mini-hydro project also won an Ashden renewable energy award given by Prince Charles.

He, however, lost his bid for another term in 2004. He worked for various nongovernment organizations after he left Ifugao politics.

Baguilat, a journalism graduate of the University of the Philippines, however, did not leave Ifugao despite the loss.

In the three years before he filed his candidacy for governor, he remained an active force behind the Save the Ifugao Rice Terraces Movement (Sitmo), which was responsible, among other things, for the organization of tours to the rice terraces to raise people's awareness on the need to protect it.

"I would say that the rice terraces are my reason for being," Baguilat said. "I don't want it to happen that 50 years from now, the terraces would just disintegrate with me doing nothing to help prevent it." *Tina Arceo-Dumlao*

It's a family affair in Negros Occidental

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

BACOLOD CITY—THE ELECToral race is all in the family and a matter of playing the game of musical chairs in many parts of Negros Occidental.

The most number of candidates come from the Marañon clan, followed by the De la Cruzes of Don Salvador Benedicto town.

Reelection

Gov. Joseph Marañon is seeking reelection while his brother Alfredo Jr. is running for mayor of Sagay City. Alfredo's son, Alfredo III, is seeking reelection as congressman of the third district, and Joseph's son, Joseph Gerard, wants to become councilor of Sagay. Leo Rafael Cueva, the governor's nephew, is running for vice mayor of Sagay.

The governor finds nothing wrong with members of one family running at the same time as long as they are competent and elected by the people in a free, honest and orderly election.

In Don Salvador Benedicto, third-term Mayor Cynthia de la Cruz will run for vice mayor while her son Marxlen, the incumbent vice mayor, will take her place as mayor. Her other son, Nehemias Jr., is running for councilor and her husband, Nehemias Sr., board member of the first district.

Mayor-vice mayor family teams are also found in Escalante and Sipalay cities. Incumbent Mayor Santiago Barcelona Jr. of Escalante, who is on his third term, is running for vice mayor, while his wife Alicia is running for mayor. Sipalay Mayor Oscar Montilla, now on his last term, is gunning for vice mayor, while his mother Soledad, a former mayor of the city, is making a comeback as mayor.

Children of two former governors are trying their luck in politics. Yesterday, Patrick Lacson, son of former Gov. Daniel Lacson Jr., resigned as executive assistant of Governor Marañon to run for board member of the third district.

Chino Coscolluela, son of former Gov. Rafael Coscolluela, who is currently presidential adviser for Western Visayas, is running for councilor of Talisay City.

Genaro Alvarez wants to become congressman anew of the sixth district in place of his son, incumbent Rep. Genaro Rafael Alvarez. His daughter-in-law, Joyce Alvarez, is running for mayor of Ilog town, in place of her husband John Paul Alvarez.

Jechonias Manzano is running for mayor of Candoni in place of his wife, incumbent Mayor Liberty Manzano.

In Pontevedra, Jose Maria Alonso is seeking the mayoral seat in place of his identical twin Jose Benito.

In Pulupandan, third-term Mayor Luis Mondia is fielding his brother, Samson, to take over his post.

THE FACE of Negros Occidental briefly became those of farmers, like these two, who went on hunger strike at the Department of Agrarian Reform building in Quezon City. Politics is taking over the province now, but a glance at the names running for various positions show it's a family affair. JOAN BONDOC

Alston report to UN slams AFP, Palace for killings

From page A1

oversight meaningless in practice."

Alston was not buying the argument that Congress couldn't look into the killings because "no new legislation was required, given that murder was already a punishable offense."

He noted that the chair of the Senate committee on justice and human rights, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, whom he met in Manila, had said that "Congress should not play any proactive oversight role regarding the executive's execution of the law."

"There is passivity, bordering on an abdication of responsibility, which affects the way in which key institutions and actors approach their responsibilities in relations to such human rights concerns," Alston said.

More than 830 activists have been summarily executed since President Macapagal-Arroyo took power in 2001, according to the human rights group Karapatan.

The Philippine military has attributed the killings to a purge in the communist movement in the country.

But Alston said the military, not the purges in the Communist Party of the Philippines, was responsible for a "significant" number of the summary executions.

In a statement dated March 27 and delivered before the council, he said the Philippine government's reaction to his inquiry had been "deeply schizophrenic" with Ms Arroyo promising "positive initiatives" while military leaders announcing "that business will continue as usual."

In the preliminary report, Alston said the final report would elaborate on "the extent to which aspects of the government's counterinsurgency strategy encourage or facilitate the extrajudicial killings of activists and other 'enemies' in certain circumstances."

"One of the key impediments to the effectiveness of many of the measures announced by the government in recent weeks is the fact that many of the accountability mechanisms, which are invoked as checks on government abuses, have been rendered ineffectual in dealing with such cases," he told the UN Human Rights Council.

"On paper, they remain strong. In practice, they are of too little use, and often, this is the result of official design," he said.

Responding to a government request, he visited the country from Feb. 12 to Feb. 21 to investigate the killings.

Justice secretary perplexed

Alston described as "perplexed" Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and "his colleagues" on the matter that government prosecutors had "some broader responsibility to take steps to uphold respect for human rights."

"Instead, their role was seen as a passive one," he noted. "If a file presented to them was insufficient, their role was simply to return it and hope that the police would do better next time."

He recommended that the Supreme Court impress upon prosecutors to "ensure the effective investigation of cases and protection of witnesses."

Ombudsman's failure

Alston also scored the Office of the Ombudsman for its failure "to act on even a single case" of the 444 complaints filed before it between 2002 and 2006.

"(It) has done almost nothing in recent years in this regard," he said. "The Ombudsman's office should begin to take its independent constitutional role in responding to extrajudicial killings plausibly attributed to public officials."

ALSTON

Orders of battle

Alston's preliminary report also brought up the issue of "orders of battle," which were allegedly used by police and the military to harm activists.

He cited a thick document, which was supposedly classified, based on intelligence reports, members of organizations considered "illegitimate" by the military.

"I am aware of no reason to doubt its authenticity," he said.

"When a significant number of individuals killed in incidents implicating the Armed Forces or police are also listed on an order of battle, it raises serious questions about the appropriateness of this practice," said the UN special rapporteur.

Alston said the administration should direct all military officers to "cease making public statements linking political or other civil society groups to those engaged in armed insurgencies."

"It involves the characterization of most groups on the left of the political spectrum as 'front organizations' for armed groups whose aim is to destroy democracy," he said.

As a result, a wide range of groups were classified as such and later, as "enemies of the State that are accordingly considered to be legitimate targets," Alston said.

Fabrication

In the statement, he dismissed as "a fabrication" a military report of a recent purge supposedly dubbed Operation Bushfire based on a document allegedly captured from rebels. The document, he said, tried to make it appear that the CPP had wanted to show that the military was behind the killings.

"I would repeat today that based on my fact-finding there is no reasonable doubt that the military is responsible for a significant number of the killings. Subsequent evidence points to the continuing nature of that practice," Alston told the council.

Hours after he left the Philippines, Alston issued a six-page press statement, saying the military was in a "state of almost total denial of its need to respond effectively and authentically to the significant number of killings which have been convincingly attributed to [it]."

Larger report

His comments on the Philippines was part of a larger report on a number of countries that Alston had visited as part of a UN mechanism to look into human rights situations in sovereign states.

"Notwithstanding the evidence I very carefully gathered many government officials insisted that large numbers of leftist activists were turning up dead because they were victims of internal purges with the Communist Party of the Philippines .... Indeed this theory was relentlessly pushed on me," Alston said.

"Is there any evidence for this theory that might make one's certainty regarding the evidence for the military's responsibility? There is not," he said.

Alston said that a month after his visit to the Philippines, he had little reason to be optimistic that the killings would stop soon.

Insults

He said that while Ms Arroyo made pronouncements on "positive initiatives," his generals dismissed him and his findings with insults.

"The impact of my visit although I have not yet completed my final report has been deeply schizophrenic. On the one hand, the President has taken a range of positive initiatives .... On the other hand, the military and many key officials have buried their collective heads in the sand and announced that business will continue as usual," Alston said.

"To give a colorful and somewhat amusing example, the defense secretary (Hermogenes Ebdane) said last week that, 'Alston won't pay attention. He is blind, mute and deaf. We can't do anything about that,'" he said.

Esperon dismissive

"(Ebdane) was apparently upset that I still do not accept the military's line that the leftist activists are being systematically killed as part of continuing purges of their own supporters," Alston said.

Alston said Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, "has been less eloquent but equally dismissive."

"Part of me appreciates the substitution (with) frank insults (the) usual diplomatic platitudes but anyone reading between the lines will receive a far more disturbing message: Those government officials who must act decisively if the killings are to end refuse to accept that there is even a problem," Alston said.

Change of heart

Alston said he had made a host of recommendations to the Philippine government.

"But I would stress that these recommendations will make little difference unless there is a fundamental change of heart on the part of the military or the emergence of civilian resolve to compel the military to change its ways," Alston said.

"Then and only then will it be possible to make real progress in ending the killings," he added.

Alston said he repeatedly asked for evidence from the military on the alleged purges but was given evidence that are "strikingly unconvincing."

"First, the CPP/NPA/NDF publicly claims responsibility for some killings. Sometimes, the victims have been current or former members. This is true, as anyone can validate by reading the CPP/NPA/NDF's publications online," Alston said.

The NPA refers to the New People's Army, armed wing of the CPP, while the NDF refers to the National Democratic Front, the political arm of the CPP.

Second, Alston said, there was indeed a purge "(but) this happened roughly 20 years ago."

Bayan Muna . . .

From page A1

Bayan Muna representative, Satur Ocampo, had helped the group gain more sympathy from the public.

"It appears that the government is our No. 1 campaigner. With what it is doing, the sympathy for party-list organizations that it is targeting is expanding," Casiño said at a forum at Max's restaurant in Ermita, Manila.

Ocampo himself said he felt "vindicated" by the "very good outcome" of the SWS survey.

"The action of the government against me and its effort to trounce Bayan Muna have elicited an effect that is negative for them but positive for us," he told the INQUIRER by phone from the Manila Police District headquarters, where he has been detained since March 16 in connection with the alleged mass murder of communist spies in Leyte 22 years ago.

He remains in detention while his petition seeking to recall the warrant for his arrest is pending before the Supreme Court.

Ocampo said he was hoping for a "full vindication" after the oral arguments scheduled at the high court tomorrow.

"I hope I will be freed so I can work in the campaign," he said.

On the defensive

With his arrest and detention, Ocampo said the government might have already thrown its best punches in its supposed effort to derail Bayan Muna's candidacy.

"It's clear that the government is now on the defensive, especially with the international focus on extrajudicial killings in our country," he said.

Casiño said the increasing public sympathy for Bayan Muna was the "silver lining" in the "dark cloud" of the administration's actions against it.

He said the administration itself was undermining the party-list system by preventing party-list representatives from doing their job of serving as the voice of marginalized sectors.

"This is really messing with the spirit of the party-list law. Party-list organizations are supposed to represent the marginalized, but these are the ones being marginalized," Casiño said, adding:

"The administration uses obviously politically motivated cases to prevent Satur from campaigning. And not only campaigning, because even if we win in the elections and the case is still there, as well as the threats and intimidation, we will have a hard time doing our job in Congress."

Irony

In a statement, Team Unity senatorial candidate Ralph Recto said Bayan Muna was "reaping the dividends of perceived persecution."

"The irony is that those who don't want the party-list group elected to Congress, possibly to their chagrin, have become its most effective campaign managers," Recto said.

"Those who succeeded in keeping Satur behind bars also succeeded in putting Bayan Muna on the front pages of newspapers. The result is that Bayan Muna is guaranteed to retain its three seats in Congress. If the aim of arresting him is to prevent him from returning to Congress, then recent developments may have just guaranteed the opposite," the reelectionist senator said.

Palace: That's the beauty of our democracy

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

"THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF OUR democracy" was Malacañang's response yesterday to the Social Weather Stations survey showing the militant Bayan Muna and two allied groups topping the party-list organizations that voters are likely to install in Congress.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita appealed to the left-leaning party-list groups to in effect not bite the hand that was feeding it.

"That's the beauty of our democracy. Can you imagine, we are battling an insurgency that's using the ways of democracy in toppling government?" Ermita said at his weekly press briefing.

"They can afford to ... exercise free speech and assembly and they are able to participate in our election and our democratic processes, and yet they are trying to use these democratic practices to topple the government," he said.

Big voice

Ermita observed that while there were only nine or 12 party-list representatives from militant organizations, they had a big voice in Congress.

"That is democratic space. What we're saying is that they should not use these democratic processes to topple the very government that gives them that much space to do their thing," he said.

The SWS said Bayan Muna, the party-list group of detained Rep. Satur Ocampo, continued to lead the party-list groups seeking representation in Congress, with its votes surging to 28 percent in March from 19 percent in February.

The same survey showed Akbayan and Gabriela, Bayan Muna's allied groups, taking the No. 2 and No. 3 positions in the party-list race.

The INQUIRER is the print media sponsor of the March, April and May rounds of the SWS survey aimed at tracking voters' preferences for the senatorial and party-list candidates in the May 14 elections.

Ermita said the repeal of Republic Act No. 1700, or the Anti-Subversion Law, was meant to encourage communist rebels to abandon their armed struggle and wage their battle in Congress.

He said the government could do nothing if the Left-leaning groups were able to secure and even dominate the party-list seats in Congress.

"I will not say it's OK with Malacañang. It's not OK if you have armed guests in your house. What we're saying is that we cannot stop them because we are in a democracy," Ermita said.

Saguisag asks SC to let him intervene in Satur case

FORMER SEN. RENE SAGUISAG, a lawyer, yesterday asked the Supreme Court to allow him to intervene in Satur Ocampo's case.

Saguisag said he wanted to justify reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo's earlier statement that Ocampo and the likewise detained Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran could not be charged for offenses they committed during the martial law years.

The ex-senator said he believed that the present charges against Ocampo and Beltran constituted harassment.

"Our surmise is that [Beltran] and ... Ocampo are being harassed for being in the opposition by administration hawks, and for running and winning fairly in electoral battles, we dare suggest," he said.

Saguisag also suggested that the high court ask former Senate President Jovito Salonga to be an *amicus curiae* in Ocampo's case.

But he said he has yet to consult Salonga about his suggestion.

An *amicus curiae*, or friend of the court, is a person not involved in a case but offers information on a point of law or another aspect of the case to help the court decide on a matter.

In his motion for intervention, Saguisag said he believed that based on the directive of President Corazon Aquino in 1986, Ocampo should be freed and not be prosecuted for crimes with political dimensions that he supposedly committed prior to the Edsa Revolt.

Salonga chaired the Presidential Commission on Good Government under Aquino; Saguisag served as Aquino's spokesperson.

Arroyo, who was Aquino's executive secretary, earlier said an amnesty declaration by the then President would lead to Ocampo's freedom.

After 'barrel man,' Baguio bares 'barrel Barbie'

From page A1

equipped with a similar mechanism that releases breasts instead of a penis.

And as in many marriages, the barrel woman has accomplished a lot more: It has outsold the "husband" for the past three years at curio shops in the Maharlika Livelihood Center, and is now considered a major tourism draw.

A number of feminists in Baguio are predictably enraged.

"The barrel man was meant as a joke. Now they're trying to sell a woman icon and it will again offer sexual innuendoes," said Lyn Madalang, executive director of the gender rights group Ebgan Inc.

But trader Nestor Mamaril is unimpressed.

"You know, we commissioned these [souvenir items] ourselves. We felt that we men have been made fun of for too long, and that it was time women got a taste of it, too," Mamaril said.

Protest statement

The original barrel man was a protest statement of sorts.

Filmmaker Kidlat Tahimik conducted a study of the sculpture in the 1990s for his consulting group, the Sunflower Collective, and discovered that Ifugao woodcarvers had produced it as a joke made at the expense of Americans based in Baguio.

The summer capital was designed and built by the American colonial government as its alternative government center and summer retreat in the early 1900s.

In building the city, the American government inadvertently displaced the Ibaloi settled here.

The Ifugao carvers, who settled in Baguio from 1920 to 1960 because of an open migration policy, put up shops and began producing "miniature Igorot" to sell to American souvenir hunters.

Some enterprising sculptors began copying US dime-store statues of American Indians, and found a way to merge that image with the indigenous Filipino image using the barrel, according to artisans based in Barangay Asin, a woodcarving community here.

But no one among these artisans produces the item today.

"We prefer to do more artistic projects," said a 24-year-old woodcarver, whose father ran one of the earliest shops in Asin.

Paete

Mamaril said many of the sculptors who mass-produced the original "man in the barrel" had died.

He said it was the woodcarving industry of Paete, Laguna, that took complete control of the market.

In fact, the barrel woman, which Paete distributors call "Bartola" because of its breasts, is a Laguna invention, Mamaril said.

"Traders have been asking for a female [counterpart of the] barrel man for years, but Paete was the only [artisan community] to respond. Unfortunately, it bears little resemblance to the authentic barrel man. The features are all wrong," he said.

But the barrel man has achieved its own level of fame.

In certain websites, the statue is referred to as Filipino pop art. It was the thematic feature of a Chicago exhibit on modern Filipino art in 2005.

Marketing

Some members of the Gender Equality and Development (GAD) Council of Baguio are monitoring the popularity of the barrel woman.

Madalang, a GAD member, said the council was trying to formulate city policies that would restrict advertising and commercial enterprises misrepresenting Filipino women.

She said that while a female version of the barrel man would ordinarily be taken as a gag, the GAD was careful about how it was being marketed.

"If people are buying because of the breasts, then that is wrong. If they're buying because it is a good joke, then it is not offensive," Madalang said.

"But we want to make sure that the line [separating humor and pornography] is never crossed," she said.

DAR chief visits installed Mapalad farmers

By TJ Burgonio

AGRARIAN REFORM SECRETARY Nasser Pangandaman on Tuesday visited with the 18 Negrense farmers who had fasted for 29 days outside his office and recently won the battle for a piece of land in a Negros Occidental sugar plantation, ending months of angry recriminations.

It was Pangandaman's first meeting with the farmers since they camped outside the Department of Agrarian Reform building in Quezon City and went on a hunger strike on Feb. 21 to protest his failure to install them in a 144-ha portion of Hacienda Velez-Malaga in La Castellana town.

Before 57 of the 122 beneficiaries were finally installed on a 53-ha portion of the land in question last Thursday, the farmers had called for Pangandaman's resignation.

"He appealed to us to work together for the installation of the rest of the beneficiaries," Eledelyn Paclibar, 55, said in an interview in the farmer's tent that had been stripped of propaganda materials as the beneficiaries prepared to go home.

The installation of the rest of the beneficiaries was put off after a rival group of farmers loyal to the landowner, Roberto Cuenca, had questioned the DAR regional office's decision declaring all 122 farmers as legitimate beneficiaries.

"We assured him we would convince the other beneficiaries to join us," Florenda Hilario, 48, said, referring to 20 of the 122 farmer-beneficiaries who had broken away and joined the rival group of farmers who had formed a cooperative.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Pangandaman for comment.

"We're thankful that he finally carried out his obligation," Hilario said, after the DAR secretary mobilized teams of soldiers and policemen to protect the beneficiaries as they took over the land in the face of the violent resistance of the other farm workers.

"We were so angry with him before. All this disappeared when we were installed," Gregorio Paclibar, 71, said.

The beneficiaries and the farmers' organization, Task Force Mapalad, had called Pangandaman names and sought his resignation for backing out of scheduled installations a number of times.

DAR placed the hacienda under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in 1996, but Cuenca went to court to stop it. In 2002, DAR granted the beneficiaries a collective certificate of land ownership on the 144-ha portion.

In a 2004 ruling on DAR v Cuenca, the Supreme Court declared that all controversies on agrarian reform fell under DAR's jurisdiction, clearing the way for the installation.

PANGANDAMAN

POLL DUTY

DepEd sets aside P30M for teachers' deaths, injuries

By Jerry E. Esplanada

IT IS A BUDGET ALLOCATION THE country's 450,000 public school teachers would rather not get.

Department of Education (DepEd) old-timers were referring to the P30 million set aside by government for the "payment for deaths or injuries suffered by teachers" sitting as members of Board of Election Inspectors or canvassers in the coming May elections.

In exchange for the scrapping of poll duty-related insurance, heirs of teacher casualties would get a total of P200,000 in benefits from the state, DepEd announced yesterday.

These were agreed upon during a recent meeting between DepEd Secretary Jesli Lapus and Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. at the Wack Wack Golf Club in Mandaluyong City.

But there is a problem, according to DepEd Undersecretary Franklin Sunga.

Verbal agreement

"At this point, it's only a verbal agreement. We have submitted the [draft for the Memorandum of Agreement] but it remains unsigned [by Abalos]. We have been following up this matter with Comelec almost every day," disclosed Sunga.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach Abalos for comment on the issue.

In yesterday's news briefing, Sunga also said that each teacher would get P3,000 in poll duty compensation.

One half of the amount or P1,500 will be paid when election paraphernalia are issued to the teachers. They will get the rest upon completion of their election duties. An additional P300 will be given to cover their transportation expenses.

Supervisors serving as members of the Board of Canvassers will get P200 for every set of election returns, but not to exceed P10,000.

In 1991, the election law provided for an honorarium of P400 per day to teachers.

In 1998, the amount increased to P800 per day, then P900 in 2001.

Breakthrough

"In 2004, it became P1,000 per day or P3,000 for three days which was a breakthrough," said Antonio Tinio, chair of the militant Alliance of Concerned Teachers or ACT.

This time, "we asked for a raise of P1,000, but they said no. *Wala raw pera* (There's no money)," Tinio said.

In a related development, DepEd insiders confided that an undisclosed number of teachers nationwide have either filed for leaves of absence or expressed their plan not to serve in the May elections.

"Many teachers would prefer not serving because of the threats of violence, harassment and other risks related to poll duty," Tinio explained.

Lapus neither confirmed nor denied the reports, although he said it was understandable.

"Of course, it is not a picnic. *'Di madali 'yan* (It's not easy) except that it is a duty," he told the INQUIRER.

Tinio observed that teachers were "not getting enough protection from government."

Lapus disputed Tinio's claims, saying: "I have initiated talks with both the Integrated Bar of the Philippines and the Association of Law Schools of the Philippines to provide our teachers with election day backup. They might get harassed by lawyers of some politicians. I've also firmed up with Comelec the compensation teachers will receive for doing poll duty which is better than the past."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, March 29, 2007
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Gen 17:3-9
Gospel: John 8:51-59

Jesus said to the Jews, "Truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he will never experience death." The Jews replied, "Now we know that you have a demon. Abraham died and the prophets as well, but you say: 'Whoever keeps my word will never experience death.' Who do you claim to be? Do you claim to be greater than our father Abraham, who died? And the prophets also died."

Then Jesus said, "If I were to praise myself, it would count for nothing. But he who gives glory to me is the Father, the very one you claim as your God, although you don't know him. I know him and if I were to say that I don't know him, I would be a liar like you. But I know him and I keep his word. As for Abraham, your ancestor, he looked forward to the day when I would come; and he rejoiced when he saw it."

The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet 50 years old and you have seen Abraham?" And Jesus said "Truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." They then picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and left the Temple.

Commentary

Abram and his descendants live in covenant with God and their part is to keep that covenant—obey God. Jesus is arguing with the people who reject him and are intent on killing him. They are misreading him and are not hearing anything he says—they have already decided what they are going to do. But Jesus is truthful and tells them if anyone is true to his word they shall never see death. This is Jesus' proclamation to us as we draw near to Holy Week and our own dying to evil and violence and what is not truth. Jesus is life—life forever—and is God, from the beginning. In John's gospel, developed around the year 100 AD, the community is declaring Jesus as God (not the emperor) knowing that they too may face death for believing in Jesus and worshipping only Jesus. They seek to kill him. Not today. But the day will come when sin and evil, when violence and injustice will be the choice of people—as it still is today. Do we keep God's covenant with us in Jesus and refuse to harm anyone? Do we obey and stand with the Truth that is Jesus?

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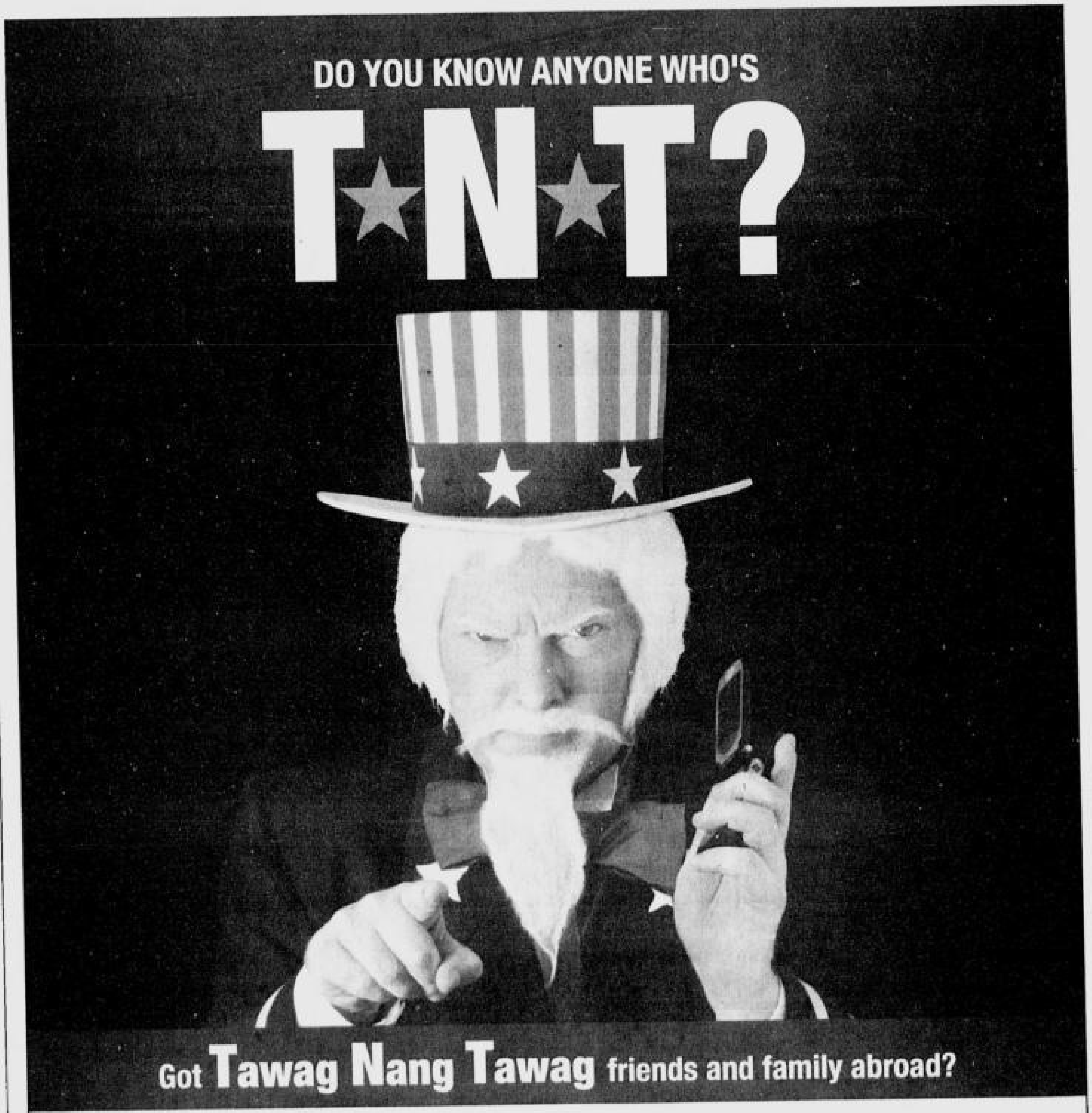
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Court orders BJMP OIC's return to post

Palace appointee fails to prove qualifications

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A QUEZON CITY JUDGE HAS ORdered the officer in charge of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) to return to his post after his replacement, who was appointed by Malacañang last month, failed to prove he was qualified for the position.

In an order dated Mar. 27, Judge Jose Paneda of the QC Regional Trial Court Branch 220 said that until Chief Supt. Armando Llamasares "is able to establish that he meets the minimum qualifications for the disputed position, his appointment thereto and discharge of the functions of the office could not be given the imprimatur (or approval) of this Court."

"Thus, Chief Supt. Clarito Jover's designation as officer in charge of the BJMP remains unless revoked by the President or a permanent and valid appointment is made," he added.

Qualifications

Jover, who was the BJMP officer in charge before Llamasares' appointment, earlier asked the court to stop the latter from taking over the bureau because of his lack of qualifications.

Jover claimed that Llamasares did not possess the 3rd level eligibility (Career Service Eligibility (CSEE)/Career Executive Service or CES) required for the top BJMP post.

On March 7, Paneda issued a temporary restraining order enjoining the two officials to "cease and desist from performing and discharging the duties of the Office of the Director of the BJMP in the interest of public service."

The judge also ordered Interior and Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno to perform the duties of the BJMP chief for 20 days.

Qualifying tests

In his new order, Paneda noted that Llamasares failed to dispute before the court that Jover was the bureau's officer in charge before his appointment.

"(Llamasares also failed to disprove) that Jover is the only one who possesses the minimum qualifications for the position as set forth in the Qualification Standard for the Uniformed Personnel of the BJMP," Paneda said.

The court document showed that Llamasares had admitted in an earlier hearing that he was not CSEE or CES eligible although he had passed the qualifying examinations for his appointment to the position of Senior Police Officer given by the National Police Commission.

The judge also pointed out that the Llamasares had not disputed the fact that Jover was the one recommended for the post of BJMP director "in accordance with the process, manner and conditions prescribed by Republic Act 9263 and under existing Civil Service Rules and Regulations."

Reaction

Jover, in an interview with the INQUIRER, expressed happiness over the court's decision.

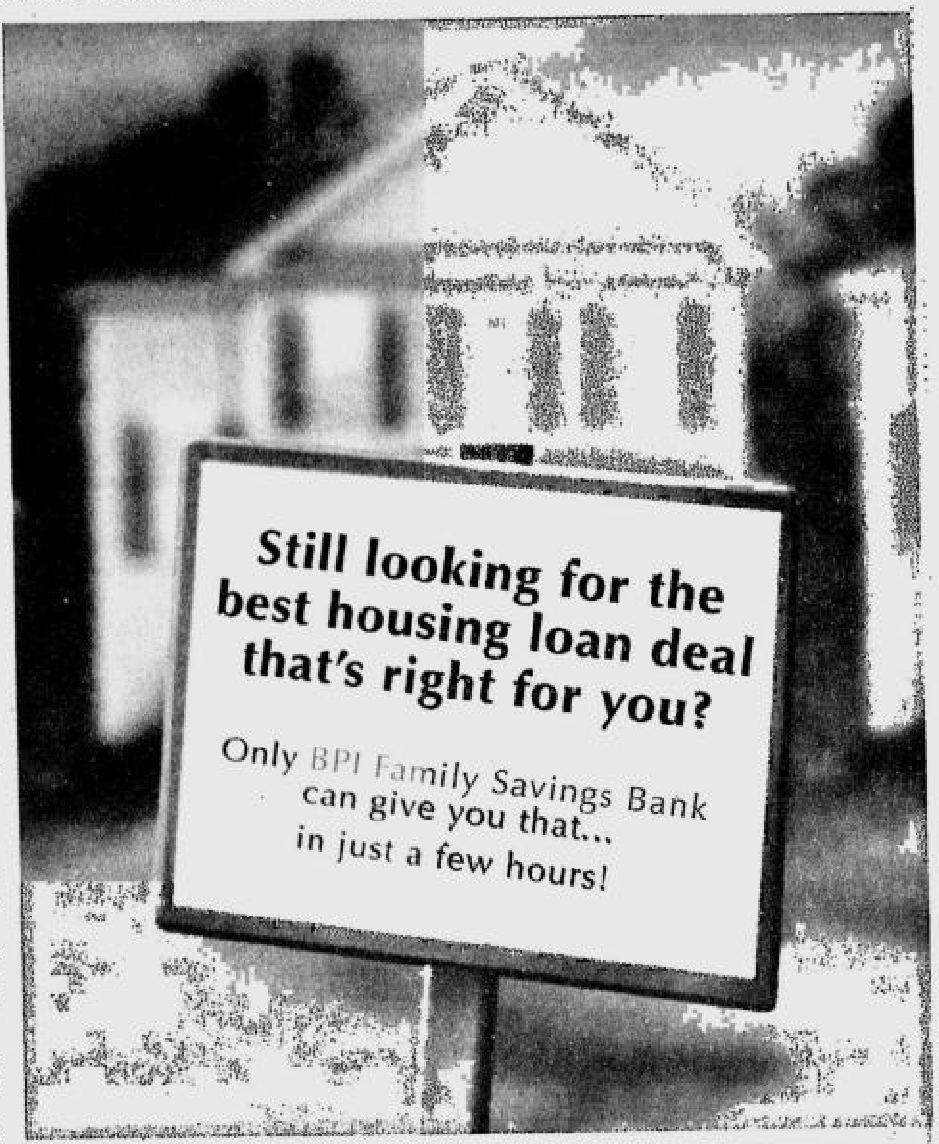
"I am very glad that I made the right decision in filing the case and in questioning Llamasares' appointment," he said.

"This only shows that the qualification standards for the position should be strictly followed," Jover added.

The BJMP officer in charge said he is planning to pay a courtesy call on Puno.

Jover's aide de camp, Senior Insp. Julius Arro, said the court's decision has boosted the morale of BJMP personnel.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Llamasares for comment, but he could not be reached.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Metro bets rush to Comelec to beat deadline

By Julie M. Aurelio, Santiago R. Alcantara and Nancy C. Carvajal

EMPLOYEES OF THE COMMISSION ON Elections were busy the whole day as more candidates running for local positions filed their certificates of candidacy yesterday, one day before the Mar. 29 deadline.

A fiesta-like atmosphere surrounded the Makati Comelec office in the morning as supporters of Mayor Jejomar Binay and his opponent, Sen. Lito Lapid, put on a boisterous show, complete with gay dancers and a brass band.

The "street party" caused a traffic jam near the corner of Ayala and Buendia Avenues, as the crowd spilled out into the street while waiting for the two candidates to arrive.

Binay arrived at 10:15 a.m. with his running mate, Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado. With them were Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin and the mayor's daughter, Abigail Binay, who will run as congressmen for the 1st and 2nd Districts, respectively.

"We will run based on our accomplishments and on our platform. It is clear to all of us that this is a proxy war, and Malacañang has high stakes on the betting table," Biñay said in a press conference after he filed his COC.

He was referring to Lapid, his opponent in the mayoral race who is a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Lapid arrived much later, with his running mate, Nemesio Yabut Jr. and son, Mark, the governor of Pampanga. With them were brothers Anthony and Erwin Genuino, who are running for councilor and congressman, respectively, under the Lakas-CMD party.

"I respect the local incumbent. There is no reason for me to collide head on with the mayor," Lapid said.

Among those in Lapid's group were celebrities Monsour del Rosario and Anne Curtis.

Reelectionists

In other cities in southern Metro Manila, other candidates also filed their papers with the poll body. Some were reelectionists while others were relatives of the incumbent.

In Pasay City, former Vice Mayor Greg Alcera will be running for vice mayor under the Liberal Party.

Alan Panaligan, the incumbent mayor, is expected to run for a seat in the House of Representatives, along with Rep. Connie Dy who is seeking the mayoralty and Vice Mayor Arvin Tolentino who wants to retain his post.

Southern hopefuls

In Muntinlupa City, Mayor Jaime Fresnedi's post is being sought by his wife, Loretta Fresnedi, who went to the local Comelec office yesterday to file her certificate.

Loretta is being fielded by the Lakas-CMD.

She will be up against Vice Mayor Aldrin San Pedro, who is the official candidate of the opposition.

Another candidate who filed his certificate was Rep. Rufino Biazon, who is running for reelection. His toughest rival is expected to be television host, Ricardo "Dong" Puno.

Mandaluyong City Rep. Benhur Abalos, meanwhile, is swapping posts with Mayor Neptali Gonzales II.

Yesterday, Abalos filed his COC for mayor and Gonzales, for congressman of the city's lone district, at the Comelec office in Intramuros, Manila. Both are running under the Lakas-CMD party.

THE RACE for Makati City's top post has begun. Mayor Jejomar Binay and his toughest rival for the post, Sen. Lito Lapid, both filed their certificates of candidacy yesterday. Binay's running mate is Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado and Lapid's, Nemesio Yabut Jr., a former Makati councilor.

ERIK ARAZAS, JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Swap

"I'm ready to come back as mayor," Abalos told the media. Gonzales said that the decision to swap was a result of "two decades and one year" of being like brothers and being comfortable working with each other.

Running as Abalos' vice mayor is City Councilor Rene Sta. Maria. The incumbent Vice Mayor, Jessie Cruz, is running as a representative of the party-list Biyaheng Pinoy.

In Caloocan, the battle for the city's top post between the Asistio brothers began yesterday after Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio Jr. officially cast his hat into the race.

Luis, who is on his third and last term as congressman of the city's first district, filed his COC yesterday at the local Comelec office.

He was accompanied by his running mate, Vice Mayor Tito Varela.

"This is a democracy and everybody is welcome to run if they feel they can serve the people," Luis told INQUIRER when asked about his brother's candidacy.

He promised to bring down business taxes if elected to office.

His brother, Macario "Boy" Asistio, who was once Caloocan City mayor, filed his papers on Monday.

According to Macario, he decided to make another bid for the city's top post because "its current political leaders, including my brother, had neglected and had abused their power, which was detrimental to the city and its residents."

No contest

Another former mayor, action star Rey Malonzo, was expected to file his COC last night.

Even before she filed her papers yesterday, Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando was already assured of victory.

Fernando, who is running for her third and last term, has no opponent.

She was wearing a pink hardhat when she went to the Comelec office with her husband, former Marikina Mayor and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, by her side.

Third term

Promising to focus on the social aspects of administration if elected for his third term, incumbent Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. yesterday filed his COC at the local Comelec.

"I concentrated on massive infrastructure during my first two terms in office," Belmonte told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"If elected, my administration will emphasize soft management, or a focus on social aspects such as livelihood," he said.

Belmonte was accompanied by Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista and incumbent Councilors Ariel Inton, Philip Juico, Bernadette Herrera, Babes Malaya and Toto Medalla who also filed their papers.

Belmonte's nephew, Vince, also filed his COC for councilor of the city's 4th District. "I just want to be remembered as someone who did his best while the ball was in his court," he said.

Unknowns

Belmonte faces competition from three political unknowns, one of whom had indicated in his COC that he was jobless.

Romeo Acebedo, 61, of Anahaw Street, Project 7, had filed his documents with the Comelec as early as January. Another candidate, Florian Yani Alvarez, 66, of BF Homes Road, Holy Spirit, reportedly a former actor, also went to the Comelec three months ago.

The latest independent candidate to file his COC for mayor was Andy Rosales, 43, who described himself as a "social engineer."

In Manila, former Congressman Amado Bagatsing filed his COC for representative of the city's 5th District. "I hope to resume serving my constituency with the same fervor and dedication I have shown in the past," Bagatsing said. *With Kristine L. Alave and Margaux C. Ortiz*

GMA's speech before publishers ironic

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO, speaking at the Manila Hotel Tuesday before the 7th Publish Asia Conference, a global organization for newspaper and media publishing, said she respects press freedom.

And yet she lets her husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, file libel cases against journalists left and right.

Ms Arroyo said her agenda was "to move the nation forward toward greater political stability, economic prosperity and peace and order."

And yet she would not answer political questions from reporters covering Malacañang.

If I were the President, I would fire the speech writer for placing her on the spot. Many in the audience were probably snickering when she spoke about the role of media in a democracy.

There is one word to describe her speech: Balderdash.

* * *

In the more than two decades of being a columnist and having had my share of libel suits, yesterday was the first time a libel case filed against me was heard a week after I posted bail.

The case filed against me and my publisher and editors at the Bandera, sister publication of the INQUIRER, made some sort of history in Philippine journalism.

Bandera publisher Eileen G. Mangubat; editor in chief Beting Laygo Dolor; executive editor Lito Bautista; managing editor Arlene Burgos; associate editor Jimmy Alcantara; and myself were summoned yesterday to appear before Judge Felixberto Olalia of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 8.

In other libel cases filed against me, the courts took their time to summon me after I posted bail, since libel is not a heinous crime.

Your Honor, why were you in such a hurry to try our case considering that you have many pending cases in your sala?

I stayed around for more than an hour after the good judge granted our lawyer's motion to defer the arraignment since we had filed a petition for review in the Department of Justice.

I waited for Eileen and Arlene to show up because I was concerned their bail bond might be cancelled if they didn't heed the court's unusually hasty summons.

While waiting for my Bandera colleagues, I spoke with a mother of a homicide victim whose son was killed by two men in 2002.

The woman complained to me that the homicide case had been in Olalia's court since 2002.

The suspects in her son's slaying, the woman said, go around scot-free in Tondo, Manila.

They have not been arrested despite a warrant issued by Olalia's court.

Now, Your Honor, why were you so fast in hearing our case when you've been dragging your feet in a homicide case filed in your sala in 2002?

* * *

From Judge Olalia's court at the Manila City Hall, I walked over to the hostage-taking scene nearby.

Being at the scene made me miss my days as a reporter covering the Manila police beat years ago when I also reported on hostage-taking incidents.

I found that the Manila police handled the situation very well.

I also observed that reporters were orderly and unusually cooperative with the police.

My congratulations to Manila Mayor Joselito Atienza and Metropolitan police chief Reynaldo Varilla, who were both at the scene, for the expert handling of the hostage situation.

* * *

The dirty hand of politics affects even close family ties.

It's now common to hear about siblings or cousins running against each other for an elective post.

But in Camarines Sur, it's a father against his own son.

Rep. Luis Villafuerte, a close ally of the President, is fielding former Congressman Eduardo Pilapil against incumbent Gov. Luis Ray Villafuerte.

I heard the reason is more than just a question of politics.

LRT, MRT take break for maintenance work

By Riza T. Olchondra

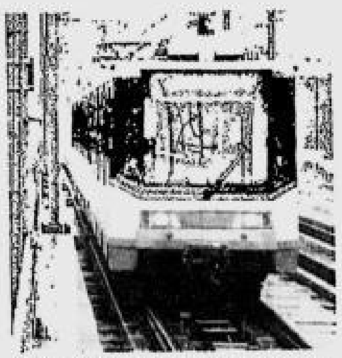
OPERATIONS OF THE LIGHT Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 and Metro Rail Transit 3 will be suspended for several days during Holy Week to allow rail systems personnel to carry out maintenance work, officials said yesterday.

April 5 (Holy Thursday) and 6 (Good Friday) are regular holidays while April 7 (Black Saturday) has been declared a special nonworking day. April 9 (Easter Monday), meanwhile, coincides with Bataan Day or Araw ng Kagitingan, a regular holiday.

"We will suspend operations from Thursday (April 5) to Monday (April 9), which is also a holiday," said Light Rail Transit Authority Administrator Mel Robles.

The LRTA operates LRT Lines 1 and 2.

Since there are usually fewer passengers during long holidays, the LRTA will extend its suspension of operations up to April 9 to let their maintenance crew check the trains, he added.



MRT 3: No rides from April 5 to 8.

EDWIN BACASMAS

The MRT 3, on the other hand, will not operate from Thursday to Sunday.

"We will resume operations on Monday," MRT General Manager Roberto Lastimoso said.

More people take the MRT 3 even during holidays since many Metro Manila residents travel on Edsa, the metropolis' main artery, to go to malls or visit entertainment and leisure outlets.

Munti official reminds bets about poster areas

By Julie M. Aurelio

WITH THE CAMPAIGN PERIOD FOR LOCAL elections about to start, candidates in Muntinlupa were reminded yesterday to keep the city's surroundings free of campaign materials.

Mayor Jaime Fresnedi also urged his fellow candidates to put up their posters only in designated common poster areas and not on electrical posts, walls or trees.

"We should maintain our city's cleanliness and orderliness drive. Candidates should be more than aware of the common poster areas," Fresnedi said.

He added that the "Metro Gwapo" campaign of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority should continue, especially against candidates who put up their campaign posters indiscriminately.

In a recent meeting of the Muntinlupa Peace and Order Council, the mayor called on the police, officials of the city's different departments and the Commission on Elections to strictly observe the Fair Elections Act throughout the election period.

Under the law, posters posted in places other than designated common areas will be taken down.

Posters can be displayed in the city's designated common poster area, located at the corner of National Road and E. Rodriguez Avenue; the entrance of Susana Heights access road and Tunasan Proper Plaza on Tunasan; Katarungan jeepney terminal and Canto basketball court on Rizal Street, among others.

Leviste, Velasco mend fences in court hearing

By Julie M. Aurelio

A WEEK AFTER HE LASHED OUT AT A STATE prosecutor inside a courtroom, Antonio Leviste, accused of killing a longtime friend, appeared to be in a more cordial mood at a hearing of his case yesterday morning.

Before the hearing could even start, one of Leviste's lawyers motioned to prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, who then exchanged smiles and a handshake with Leviste, a former Batangas governor and estranged husband of senatorial candidate Loren Legarda.

The ice appeared to be broken between prosecutor and accused, who a week ago threatened Velasco in open court during the latter's arraignment. "I told him that we are not supposed to be enemies. In fact, his father (Epimaco) and I are very good friends," Leviste told reporters after the two-hour proceeding.

Velasco, likewise, saw no problem in mending fences. "I told him that this is just part of my job," said the state prosecutor.

Leviste has been charged with the murder of his trusted aide, Rafael de as Alas, during a heated argument inside the LPL Towers building in January.

Last week, Leviste took to task the state prosecutor for supposedly issuing "improper comments" to the media regarding the accused and the merits of the case as well.

In his petition, Leviste asked Judge Elmo Alameda of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 150 to resolve his earlier request for a gag order, saying it was high time the prosecution was stopped from issuing damaging statements.

"But issuing a gag order for interviews, wouldn't that be prior restraint on the people's right to information?" Alameda said. The court ordered Velasco to respond with his comments on the motion in 15 days. Velasco claimed he spoke only about documents and evidence pertinent to the case.

Woman files complaint vs QC hospital for son's death

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A WOMAN'S GRIEF OVER HER 9-year-old son, who died while he was confined in a Quezon City hospital, prompted her to go to the police to file a complaint against hospital officials yesterday.

Evangeline Mangahas, a resident of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, claimed that her son, Alvin, died after a nurse of the Philippine Children's Medical Center gave him the wrong medicine.

According to her, Alvin went into convulsions and lost consciousness after he was injected with ceftazidime, an antibiotic. The drug allegedly set off an allergic reaction which killed her boy, she added.

Ceftazidime is an antibiotic and antibacterial drug used to treat bacterial infections of the lower respiratory tract, urinary tract, skin, bones and joints, pelvis and the abdomen.

Case investigator SPO1 Rodrigo Barrameda of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Unit said Alvin had been confined at the hospital since March 21 for rheumatic heart disease. The child died at around 1 a.m. yesterday, several hours after a nurse twice administered the drug intravenously.

In a telephone interview with the INQUIRER, PCMC director Dr. Julius Leociones said that based on initial autopsy findings, the boy died of heart failure and that there was no sign the drug had caused his death.

Leociones said that last year, Alvin was diagnosed with rheumatic heart disease by doctors of the Philippine Heart Center who recommended surgery to save the boy's life. The child, however, did not undergo an operation, he added. On Mar. 21, Alvin was admitted to the PCMC for bronchopneumonia. The PCMC director said that on March 27, they gave ceftazidime, among other antibiotics, to the boy, to cure the bacterial infection. When Mangahas complained that her son starting having chills, they stopped giving the drug, he added.

The hospital has formed a fact-finding team to look into the case.

DID YOU KNOW

THE JOB of distributing water to Metro Manila was transferred to Maynilad Water Services Inc. and Manila Water Co. Inc. when they took over the state-owned Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System in August 1997. West zone operations were assigned for 25 years to Maynilad—whose majority shareholder was the Lopez family's Benpres Holdings—and the east zone to the Ayala-led Manila Water.

Because of financial difficulties, Benpres Holdings transferred its 84-percent stake in Maynilad to the government, which later bid it out to the DM Consunji Inc.-Metro Pacific Investment consortium.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Arabs to renew peace offer to Israel at Saudi summit

RIYADH—ARAB LEADERS WILL revive a 5-year-old land-for-peace offer to Israel when they meet at a summit in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, seeking an end to decades of conflict at the heart of the region's problems.

The two-day Arab League summit is set to offer the Jewish state normal ties with all Arab countries if it fully withdraws from land it occupied in 1967, accepts a Palestinian state and agrees to a "just solution" for Palestinian refugees.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas urged Israel to take up the offer, calling it a last chance for peace with Muslims.

"This initiative simply says to Israel 'leave the occupied territories and you will live in a sea of peace that begins in Nouakchott and ends in Indonesia,'" Abbas said on Tuesday, referring to the capital of Mauritania in West Africa and the country with the world's largest Muslim population.

"If this initiative is destroyed, I don't believe there will be another opportunity in the future like this."

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faisal said on Monday the plan would have a strong chance of winning international support and of reviving Israeli-Arab peace talks if adopted unanimously by all Arab leaders at the March 28-29 summit.

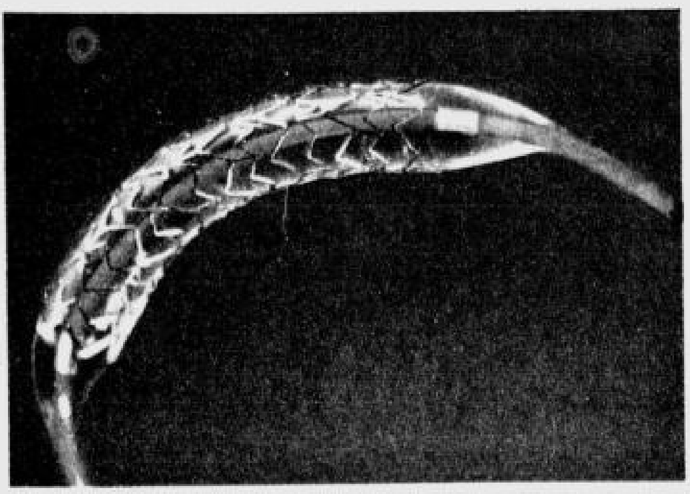
Draft resolutions, hammered out on Monday, are dominated by the Arab-Israeli conflict and appear designed to entice Israel into talks without altering the text of the peace plan.

The draft text calls on "all Israelis to accept the initiative and seize the current opportunity to return to a direct and serious negotiating process at all levels." It also sets up a mechanism to promote the peace plan that could pave the way for Arab countries with no ties to Israel, including Saudi Arabia, to open channels of communications with the Jewish state—a long-time goal of US administrations.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who will attend the summit, said on Monday that Israeli and Palestinian leaders, along with officials from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, could be invited to attend the next Quartet meeting, expected to take place in Egypt.

The "Quartet" of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia has been responsible for steering peace talks.

Yet the plan faces many hurdles. Israel has objected to key elements, including the proposed return to 1967 borders, the inclusion of Arab East Jerusalem in a Palestinian state and the return of Palestinian refugees to homes in what is now Israel. *Reuters*



THIS is an undated photo provided by Boston Scientific that shows the drug-coated Taxus Express Paclitaxel Eluding Coronary Stent System. AP

Use of stents does not reduce mortality—study

NEW ORLEANS—THE USE OF stents in obstructed arteries, a widespread and lucrative heart disease treatment, does not reduce mortality in stable patients, a study released Monday found.

The results, released at a gathering of the American College of Cardiology (ACC), looked at the use of stents to reduce mortality compared to use of drugs alone, and could encourage a major shift in the way physicians treat heart disease patients.

The finding could rock a $6 billion a year industry, $3.2 billion of which is done in the United States.

US-based Johnson and Johnson and Boston Scientific are the top manufacturers of the devices.

"As an initial management strategy in patients with stable coronary artery disease, percutaneous coronary intervention (PCI, or stent insertion) did not reduce the risk of death, myocardial infarction, or other major cardio-vascular events when added to optimal medical therapy," write the authors of the study due to appear in the March 29 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine.

The mortality rate was around eight percent in both groups at the end of the study. Related risks such as death, heart attack and other cardiovascular incidents, were 20 percent and 19.5 percent, respectively, a statistically negligible difference.

Dubbed the Courage trial (Clinical Outcome Utilizing Revascularization and Aggressive Drug Evaluation), its results "should lead to changes in the treatment of patients with stable coronary artery disease, with expected substantial health care savings," wrote cardiologists Judith Hochman and Gabriel Steg in an editorial in the same edition of the New England Journal of Medicine. *AFP*

Britain enacts historic N. Ireland deal

LONDON—BRITAIN ON TUESday rushed a deal to restore power-sharing in Northern Ireland through parliament, a day after it was struck at historic talks between rival Protestant and Catholic leaders in Belfast.

The emergency legislation was passed at all its stages without a vote in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords after it received cross-party backing and also received royal assent from Queen Elizabeth II.

Now that the deal has had parliamentary approval there will be a six-week delay before self-rule is resumed in the long-troubled British province, which has been run by London since 2002.

Britain's Northern Ireland Secretary Peter Hain described the moment as a "triumph of peace over conflict ... we have reached a turning point in the history of Northern Ireland." Long-time arch foes Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams made history on Monday by holding their first-ever face-to-face meeting, clinching an accord only hours ahead of a midnight deadline set by London and Dublin.

Specifically they agreed to restore power-sharing on May 8, as demanded by Democratic Unionist (DUP) chief Paisley, who wants more time to assess the commitment of Adams's Sinn Fein party to policing in Northern Ireland.

The accord was welcomed above all by Blair, who has pushed for a Northern Ireland deal before he leaves office within the next six months after a decade in power.

"It is an amazing day actually for Northern Ireland (and) for the history of these islands," Prime Minister Tony Blair told GMTV television. "Now I think there is at long last the chance for a lasting peace." "I am delighted to have played a part in it but actually I think the primary thanks goes to the people who have worked so hard out here in Northern Ireland, for the political leaders who have shown a lot of courage," he said.

Adams, whose Catholic-backed party is the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), said the deal opened up a "new era" for Northern Ireland, while Protestant preacher Paisley hailed "enormous opportunities." In Washington, US State Department spokesperson Tom Casey said: "It is certainly a very positive step and one that moves the process forward. We welcome it and certainly hope to see that agreement now implemented." Paisley and Adams were figureheads of Northern Ireland's sectarian divide and bitter foes throughout the so-called "Troubles," which saw more than 3,000 people killed over three decades.

Paisley is now likely to become the province's first minister, with Sinn Fein chief negotiator Martin McGuinness, a former IRA commander, as his deputy. *AFP*

'Da Vinci Code' author wins copyright infringement case

LONDON—BRITAIN'S COURT of Appeal rejected a suit Wednesday from two authors who claimed novelist Dan Brown stole their ideas for his blockbuster novel "The Da Vinci Code."

Michael Baigent and Richard Leigh, authors of "The Holy Blood And The Holy Grail," now face legal bills of about 3 million pounds ($6 million) after losing their appeal against publisher Random House Inc.

Baigent and Leigh had argued that Brown stole significant elements from their book. Both books are based on a theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene married and had a child, and that the bloodline continues to this day.

Their lawyers said Baigent and Leigh had "expended a vast amount of skill and labor" in writing their book, first published in 1982. "That skill and labor is protectable."

Brown testified for several days during the High Court hearing last year.

The claimants' lawyer, Jonathan Rayner James, said that although the suit had been against the publisher rather than the author, Brown was really the one being put on trial for his work.

During a hearing earlier this year, Rayner James said issues remained about the role of Brown's wife, Blythe, who did much of the original research for the blockbuster novel. She did not testify at the High Court hearing. Brown said he wanted to protect his wife from publicity.

In April, Justice Peter Smith ruled that Random House, publisher of "The Da Vinci Code," had not breached the copyright. Smith said the claim was based on a "selective number of facts and ideas artificially taken out of (the book) for the purpose of the litigation."

"The Da Vinci Code" has sold more than 40 million copies since its release in March 2003. A film version starring Tom Hanks was released last year.

"The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail" was also published by Random House. It was a best seller when released. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

3 more bird flu deaths in Indonesia

JAKARTA—Indonesia announced three more human bird flu deaths on Wednesday, a day after it agreed to resume sending samples of the virus to the World Health Organization, ending a months-long dispute that experts said risked millions of lives. The three people—one of them a 15-year-old boy—were confirmed to have died from the virus, officials said, bringing the number of dead in the country to at least 69. Two victims lived on different parts of Java island, while the third died on Sumatra. *AP*

4.8 aftershock jolts central Japan

TOKYO—An earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 4.8 jolted the west coast of central Japan on Wednesday, Japan's Meteorological Agency said. It struck at 8:08 a.m. In the Noto peninsula 300 km west of Tokyo, three days after a powerful earthquake in the same area killed one person, injured over 200 and destroyed hundreds of homes. There have been hundreds of aftershocks since Sunday's quake, which had a magnitude of 6.9. *Reuters*

Space junk falls near airliner

WELLINGTON—Flaming space junk from a Russian satellite narrowly missed hitting a Chilean airliner over the Pacific Ocean, reports said Wednesday. The pilot of a LAN Chile Airbus A340 en route to New Zealand told air traffic controllers he had seen pieces of flaming space junk falling about eight kilometers in front of the plane and behind it, TV3 said. The aircraft was not struck by any of the debris and later landed safely in Auckland. Airways New Zealand said it had been warned by Russian authorities that an obsolete satellite was due to fall into the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday. *AFP*

Over 70 burned in Nigeria tanker fire

LAGOS—A tanker lorry caught fire in northern Nigeria following a crash, killing more than 70 people who were scooping fuel from it, police said Wednesday. The accident happened in Kaduna State on Monday evening, the police spokesperson for Kaduna, Saad Yahaya, said. *AFP*

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Nearly 80 killed in Iraq blasts

MOSUL—A SUICIDE BOMBER TRICKED SOLdiers into believing he was bringing food supplies to a northern Iraqi town on Tuesday in the deadliest of a spate of attacks that killed nearly 80 people nationwide.

The blast ripped through Tal Afar, unleashing carnage and destroying buildings after a crowd of hungry Iraqis surrounded the vehicle that residents and soldiers believed was a supply convoy following a week of food shortages.

Just moments after being waved into the area by Iraqi soldiers, the bomber detonated his cargo of flour and explosives, killing and wounding those around just three days after a marketplace suicide attack in the same town.

An Iraqi army officer told AFP that 55 people were killed and at least 125 wounded in the truck bombing and a separate car bombing in the same town of some 200,000 people, unable to specify a separate toll break-down.

The US military, which scrambled helicopters to evacuate the wounded to US medical facilities, said several buildings collapsed in the explosion that blasted a 15-meter diameter crater out of the ground.

Tuesday's bombings raised further concerns about escalating insecurity in the mixed Shiite-Sunni town after US President George W. Bush last year held it up as a model for coalition efforts to create a stable Iraq.

On March 20, 2006 Bush hailed the onetime militant stronghold as "a free city that gives reason for hope for a free Iraq." Since then, Iraqi violence has risen so high that even the Pentagon has cited elements of civil war.

The Tal Afar attacks came just hours after US forces in Iraq said they had arrested two leaders of a network suspected of killing about 900 civilians and wounding nearly 2,000 others in a campaign of car bombings.

Haytham Kazim Abdallah al-Shimari and Haydar Rashid Nasir al-Shammari al-Jafar were detained separately on March 21 in the north Baghdad Sunni rebel bastion of Adhamiyah, the US military said.

Tuesday's truck bomber mimicked tactics deployed in the south Baghdad insurgent stronghold of Dura last Saturday when a bomber disguised as a merchant bringing building supplies to a police station killed 20 people. *AFP*

Britain turns up pressure on Iran

LONDON—BRITAIN WAS LIKELY TO RATCHet up the pressure on Iran Wednesday as Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett briefs lawmakers on the mounting crisis involving 15 British sailors and marines held by Iran.

In what may be the "different phase" of the dispute that Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke of on Tuesday, officials are also set to give a briefing presenting evidence of Britain's certainty that the sailors were in Iraqi waters when Iran captured them last Friday, British newspapers reported.

Britain insists that the eight sailors and seven marines held by Iran were conducting "routine" anti-smuggling operations when they were seized at gunpoint in the Shatt al-Arab waterway in the north of the Gulf on Friday.

Iran says they had intruded into Iranian waters, though that claim is contested by Iraq.

Beckett had been visiting Turkey on Tuesday, but cut the official trip short in order to report to parliament, after hitting a dead end in her talks with her Iranian counterpart Manouchehr Mottaki.

A Foreign Office spokesperson said Beckett "spoke in very robust terms" with Mottaki.

Meanwhile, The Guardian and The Sun reported that British officials will present evidence on Wednesday backing up their claims that the sailors were in Iraqi territorial waters.

According to The Guardian, the evidence is to include maps, detailed coordinates, and photographs.

Blair's official spokesperson said on Tuesday that London was "utterly certain" that the sailors were in Iraqi waters.

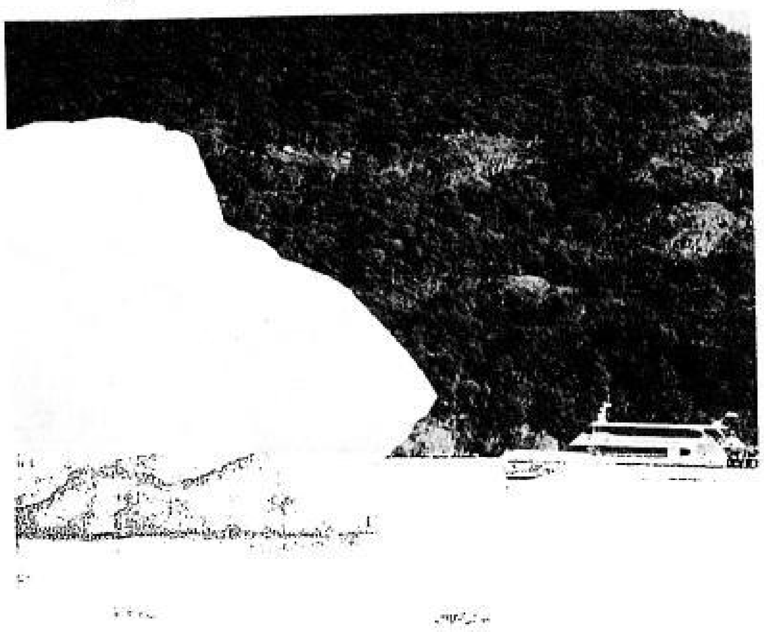
"So far, we haven't made explicit why we know that because we don't want to escalate this.

But he added: "We may come to the stage where we have to become more explicit about why we know this." Blair said Britain was trying to "pursue this through the diplomatic channels and make the Iranian government understand these people have to be released.

"If not, then this will move into a different phase," he added in an interview with GMTV television.

His spokesperson said London was not looking to escalate the standoff and would prefer a diplomatic solution, insisting that Britain was not considering military action or throwing out Iran's ambassador.

However in Tehran, Iranian foreign ministry spokesperson Mohammad Ali Hosseini denounced the British remarks. *AFP*



MELTING GLACIER

A boat sails near a huge piece of ice, broken off the Upsala glacier, floating in the waters of Lago Argentino in Argentina, March 27. The Upsala glacier, one of the largest in the southern hemisphere, has a wall of ice of more than 60 meters above the water surface, is 60 km long and has a total surface of 595 sq. km.

REUTERS

US Senate backs troop withdrawal

WASHINGTON—THE US SENate on Tuesday endorsed a March 31, 2008, target date for withdrawing American combat troops from Iraq, prompting the White House to threaten a veto and moving Congress a step closer to a showdown with President George W. Bush over the war.

By a vote of 50-48, the Senate defeated an amendment that would have stricken the withdrawal language from a $121.6 billion bill that mostly would fund the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With the outcome in doubt, Vice President Dick Cheney was on hand in the Capitol in case he was needed to cast a tie-breaking vote.

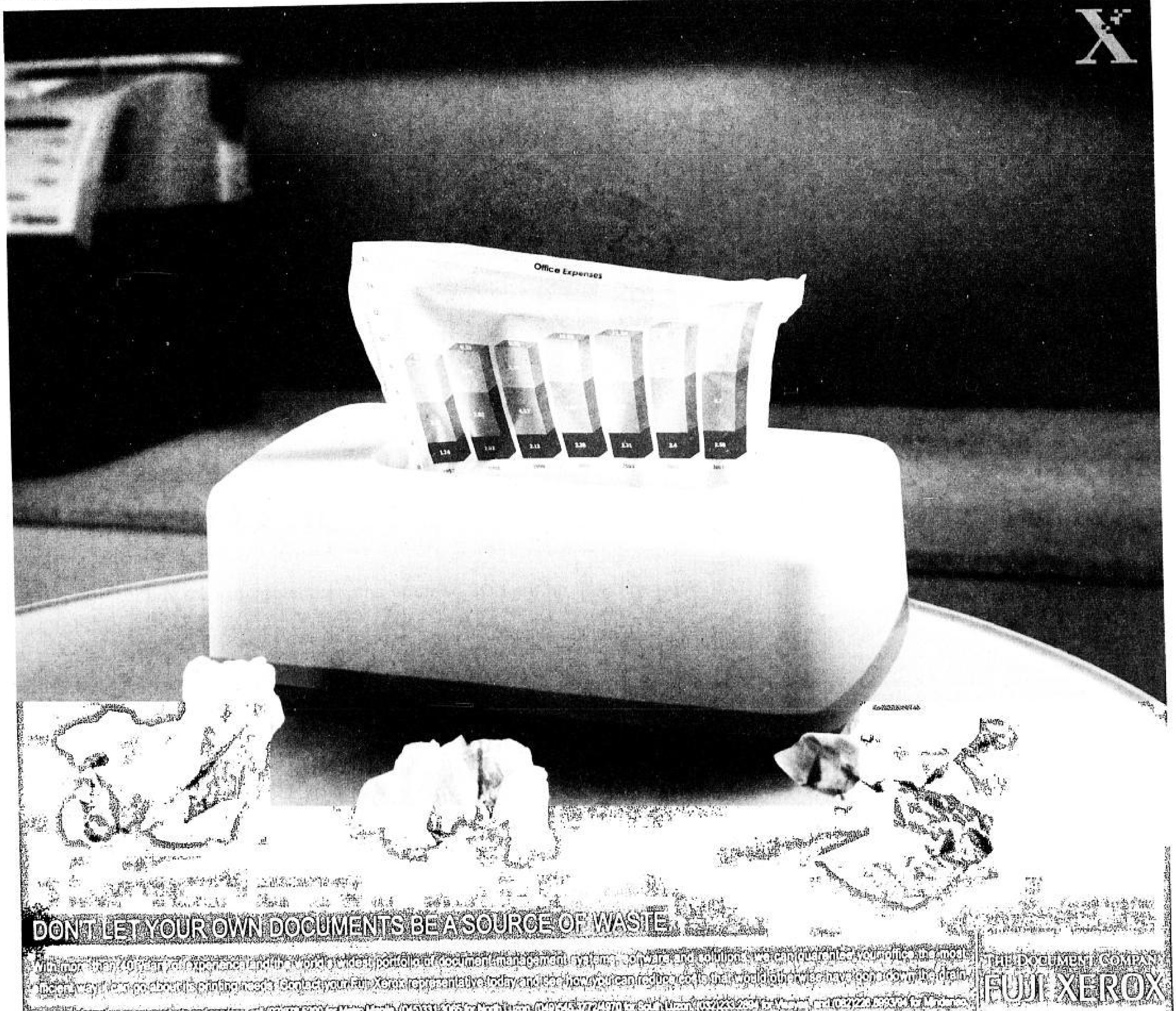
A final vote on the bill is expected this week.

Following the vote, White House spokesperson Dana Perino cited "encouraging signs" lately in Iraq. "The president is disappointed that the Senate continues down a path with a bill that he will veto and has no chance of becoming law," she added.

But Democrats showed no signs of backing down.

"This war is not worth the spilling of another drop of American blood," Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, a Nevada Democrat, said in pleading for the troop withdrawal plan included in the money bill.

Speaking to reporters following the Senate vote, Reid countered the White House veto threat, saying, "We would hope that the president understands how serious we are and the American people are and that, rather than making all the threats that he has, let's work with him" toward a compromise. *Reuters*



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Phelps rips another swim mark in 'Worlds' /A30

PACQUIAO works the speed ball.

Pacquiao suffers minor cut, sparring session grinds to halt

A MINOR CUT ABOVE THE LEFT EYEbrow of superstar Manny Pacquiao forced the cancellation of his sparring session yesterday at the Wild Card Gym in Los Angeles.

According to Fil-Am Jeff De Guzman, a gym regular who was at ringside when the incident happened, Pacquiao was cut by the tape used by one of his sparmates, prompting the stoppage of the sparring session.

Pacquiao's trainers called the injury a "minor scratch" that measured one and a half inches, but was not severe enough to threaten his April 14 bout with Mexican Jorge Solis.

"He's been using a thin headgear, and he's been complaining about that for the longest while," De Guzman said.

De Guzman added that Pacquiao had already finished with the scheduled ten-round sparring session, but wanted one more round saying he was just getting started.

"He wanted to spar another round and was cut instead," said de Guzman. "When [trainer] Buboy [Fernandez] saw the wound, the sparring was stopped," added De Guzman.

Pacquiao, according to reports, vented his ire on a punching bag after it was decided he had to stop sparring for the day.

Pacquiao's trainers, meanwhile described their fighter as already in "85 percent peak form" as of yesterday.

"He has not yet peaked. He sparred ten rounds. He got cut but everything is fine. The mental preparation is what they are working on right now," said De Guzman.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Red Bull ends Air21 streak; Giants score

GAME TODAY (*Muntinlupa City*)
7 p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs San Miguel Beer

By Musong R. Castillo

RED BULL PLAYED STEADIER IN THE stretch behind James Penny and ended the unbeaten run of Air21, 116-111, last night to grab the solo lead in the PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Penny scored 40 points, grabbed 14 rebounds and swatted away four enemy attempts as the Barako moved past the Express with a 5-1 win-loss record.

"We played their (Express') running game because we felt that our import (Penny) was quicker than (Shawn) Daniels," Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao said. "And as good and as hard as Air21 played, I had a feeling (coming into the game) that they were going to lose this one.

"They were due to play a bad game, lose some breaks," Guiao added. "It's the law of averages."

The Express saw their franchise-best start halted at four games to drop into a second place tie with idle Alaska and Barangay Ginebra.

Purefoods showed it can win with Marquin Chandler riding the bench, getting the goods from Paul Artadi and James Yap in the fourth quarter of a 101-95 decision over Talk 'N Text in the nightcap.

Artadi had six assists and Yap tossed in 15 of his 23 in the fourth when Chandler was pulled out because of fouls as the Giants held off the Phone Pals to improve to 2-4.

Talk 'N text dropped to 2-3.

The Barako did not just run, they also forced the Express to bang bodies with them—an aspect where Red Bull considers its comfort zone.

Express Homer Se was thrown out in the second quarter after coming into contact with a game official while contesting a call.

Penny was roughed up early but responded by shooting 39 points in the first three periods before helping out defensively in the stretch to preserve the win.

Red Bull led by as many as 16 points early in the fourth period, but Air21 battled doggedly back and even came to within a point 105-106, after a Daniels reverse with 5:39 to play.

The Express never got to wrest the driver's seat, however, even if the Barako went scoreless for a three-minute spell that was only snapped when Penny hit his lone fourth quarter point via a charity split off Mark Telan.

"James again came through for us, both in offense and defense," Guiao said in praise of his prized import.

Daniels did work harder on offense, shooting 29 points. But he had two crucial misses from the stripe with 71 seconds left which could have tied the game at 109. He also finished with 19 boardds and missed a triple double by just two assists.

The scores:

First Game

RED BULL 116—Penny 40, Valenzuela 15, Baguio 12, Fonacier 10, Sharma 10, Najorda 6, Robinson 6, Cruz 6, Villanueva 5, Alvarez 4, Buğla 2, Ybanez 0, Hrabak 0.

AIR21 111—Daniels 29, David 24, Santos 21, Telan 10, Canaleta 9, Arboleda 5, Andaya 4, Dimaunahan 3, Bernardo 2, Se 2, Torion 2.

Quarters: 31-22, 67-54, 95-86, 116-111.

Second Game

PUREFOODS 101—Chandler 29, J. Yap 23, Yee 14, Evangalista 14, Salvador 8, Castillo 8, Artadi 4, Simon 4, R. Yap 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 95—Sullinger 34, Cardona 15, Washington 14, Carey 13, Allado 6, Belano 6, Fran 3, De Ocampo 3, Billones 1.

Quarters: 28-14, 48-39, 68-70, 101-95

RP five boosts SBP grassroots project

By Musong R. Castillo

THE ALL-STAR NATIONAL QUINTet made up of Philippine Basketball Association millionaires leaves for the United States tonight to embark on a two-week training camp in Los Angeles.

As a way of showing their gratitude, the players and the coaching staff have decided to donate their training allowances from the Philppine Sports Commission amounting to close to P200,000 to the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' grassroots program.

"It's a parting gift from us, one of our ways of helping sports development and the other athletes," said coach Chot Reyes.

"To a man, our thinking is 'we're not doing this for the money, we're doing this for the country.'"

Leaving with Reyes are Asi Taulava, Renren Ritualo and Jimmy Alapag of Talk 'N Text, Mick Pennisi of Red Bull, Danny Seigle and Dondon Hontiveros of San Miguel Beer, Ranidel de Ocampo of Air21, Kerby Raymundo of Purefoods, Tony dela Cruz of Alaska, and Jayjay Helterbrand and Mark Caguioa of Ginebra, assistant coach Aboy Castro and Dennis Aenlle, the strength and conditioning coach.

The team leaves at around 10 p.m. and will arrive in Los Angeles at around 6 p.m. on Thursday.

They will be based in Carson City where they will work out at the Abunassar Impact Basketball training camp, which has among its clients NBA superstars Kevin Garnett and Chauncey Billups.

"We'll rest (on Thursday) and go to work on Friday and Saturday," said Reyes after yesterday's abbreviated practice at the Moro Lorenzo Sports Center . "Sunday is off, then we'll go all the way again."

Practice was cut short by an hour, Reyes said, to "give the players a day and a half to take care of their last-minute things." Call time at the Ninoy Aquino International is at 7:30 tonight.

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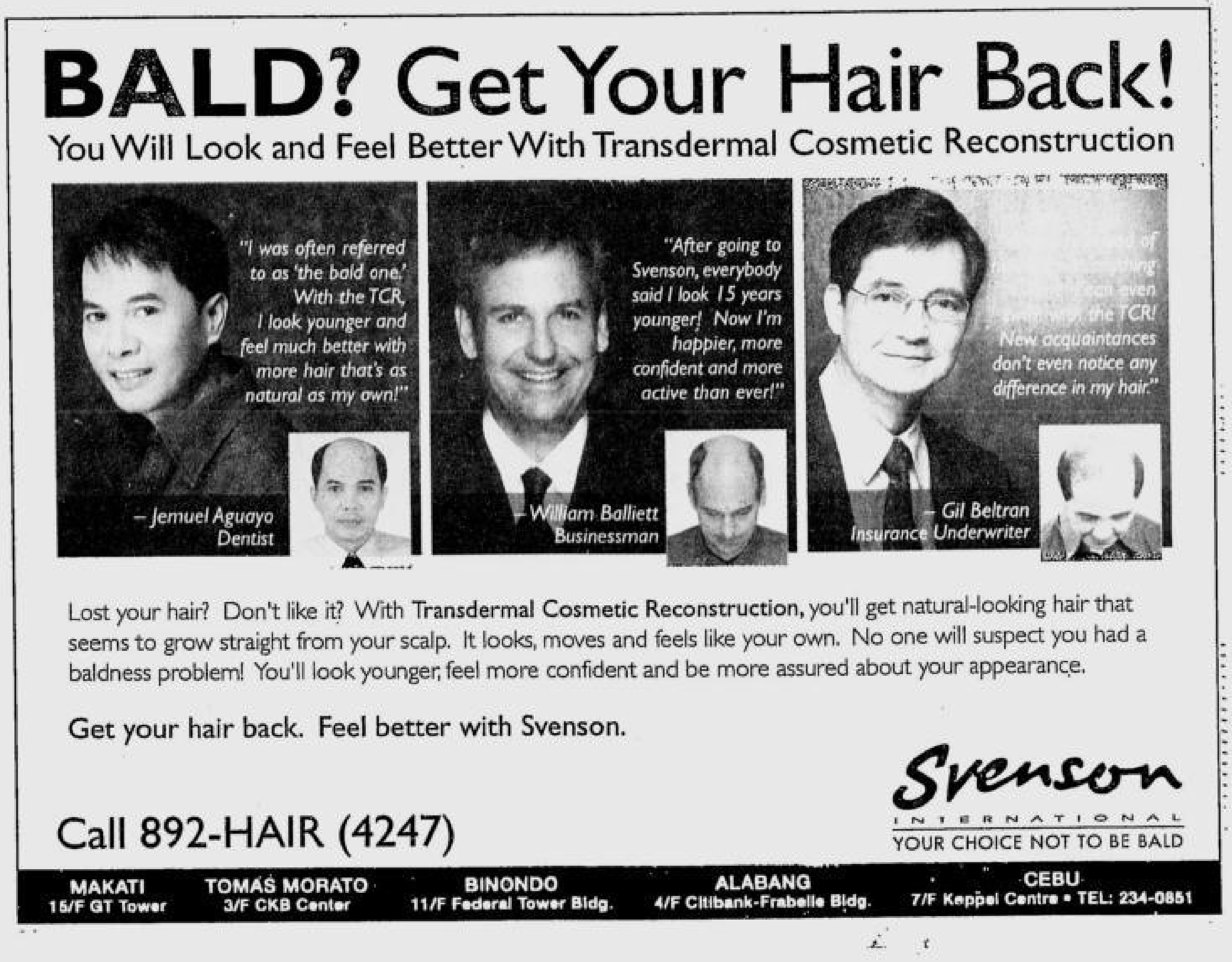

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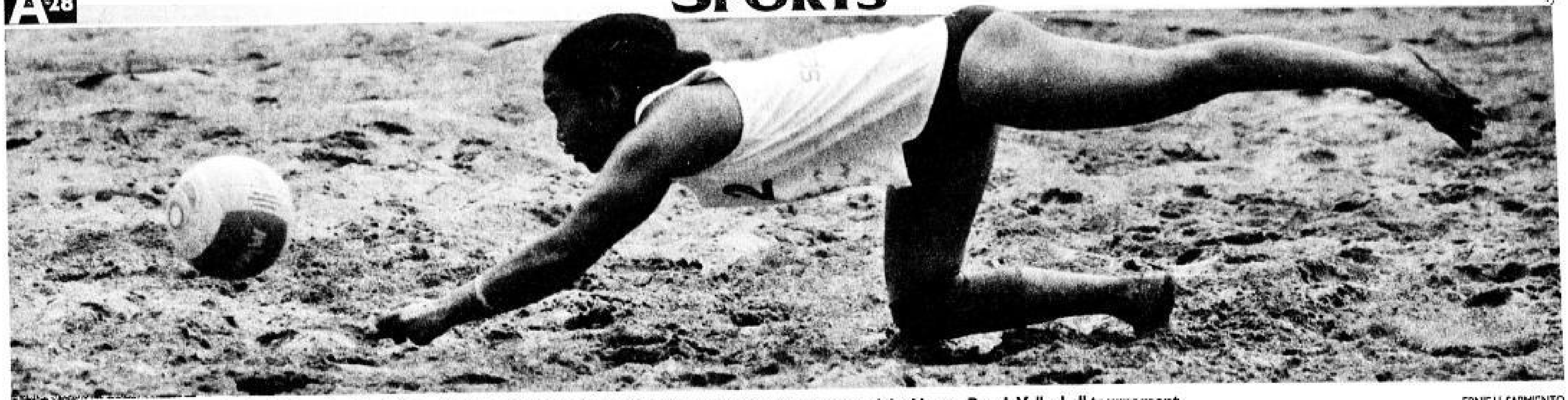


WILMA Magsayo of the Foundation University dives for the ball in a never-say-die show during the Visayas elimination of the Nestea Beach Volleyball tournament. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

USC, USPF tossers book Boracay beach volley slots

By June Navarro

UNIVERSITY OF SAN CARLOS' RODERICK Arenasa and Edward Carlo Tecson came back to win three successive matches in the Visayas qualifying yesterday and secure a slot in the 2007 Nestea Beach Volley national championship in Boracay.

Arenasa and Tecson capped their rally with a 21-19, 19-21, 15-9 win over St. La Salle-Bacolod's Emmanuel Luces and Mark Sabusap following their conquest of University of San Agustin and University of San Jose Recoletos.

The USC tandem are actually vying for the Visayas title at presstime with James Ryan Rivera and Ronald Melencion of the University of Southern Philippines Foundation, who won their initial match, 21-16, 21-19.

"That loss taught us to be patient and aggressive," said Arenasa, who will compete in the championship slated Apr. 19-21 for the third straight year.

With a new partner in Tecson, Arenasa is hoping to improve his fifth-place finish last year and be in contention for the P150,000 champion's purse.

"To win the crown is special but to go to Boracay and qualify for the championships is enough reward," said the 19-year-old Arenasa.

Melencion and Rivera made it to the championship duel after prevailing over Foundation University's Rolando Agus and Arnel Madeo, 21-17, 21-17.

Agus and Madeo went on to clinch the third Visayas qualifying slot by walloping Luces and Sabusap, 21-15, 21-15.

In the women's division, Julett Mae Marikit and Genie Sabas of University of San Jose Recoletos made it to Boracay after carving out a 21-11, 21-16 win over the USPF sister team of Yvonne Lorraine and Erika Camille Verano.

Janez Armie Igot and Jusabelle Brillo of University of Visayas also booked a Boracay slot following a 21-11, 21-14 triumph over Southwestern's Marites Natad and Janelle Tabio.

USPF and Southwestern were disputing the third and last ticket also at presstime presstime.

Teams from Mindanao take a crack at the national championship slots today and tomorrow in the event sponsored by Speedo, Mikasa, Villa de Oro, Boracay Mandarin Island Hotel, Schering Plough Coppertone, Crystal Sand, D'Mall D'Boracay and Hey! Jude.

Alcano keeps fighting

RONNIE ALCANO WON'T GO DOWN WITHout a fight.

The reigning 9-ball and 8-ball world champion edged former snooker specialist Benjie Guevarra Jr., 9-8, and stayed alive in the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium in Manila yesterday.

Inspired by a throng of supporters holding up a banner that read "We Support Alcano," the 34-year-old lanky cue artist cleaned up the table after a miscue of Guevarra in the 5-9 combo in the 17th rack to remain in contention.

"I thought I would lose," Alcano said in Filipino. "Luckily, Benjie missed the 5-9 combination."

Alcano surged ahead, 7-4, before Guevarra managed to win two straight racks and close in at 7-6.

"I want to thank the people who came here to show their support," said Alcano, who beat Japan-based Roel Esquillo (9-6) then lost the other day to Fidel Punzalan, 9-5.

Alcano admitted that he's still affected by the child abuse charges filed against him by his 14-year-old daughter the other day.

"It's a big factor that people continue to trust me and believe that I can't do such a thing," said Alcano.

Meanwhile, Japan-based Ramil Gallego and Antonio Lining hurdled their respective rivals to remain unscathed.

Gallego toppled Doha Asian Games 9-ball gold medalist Antonio Gabica, 9-7, while Lining, from Pinamalayan, Oriental Mindoro, downed Edgar Acaba, 9-5.

Acaba shocked Asiad 9-ball silver medalist Jeffrey De Luna, 9-6, late Tuesday in one of TV table matches.

In women's play, Rubilen "Bingkay" Amit, the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian games double gold winner posted her third straight victory to reach the semifinal round.

The 25-year-old Mandaue cue wizard blanked Jingle David, 7-0, in the race-to-7, alternate break format of the event presented by San Miguel Corporation.

Actually, Guevarra made his second golden break in the 16th rack to level at 8-all. His first golden break in the 10th cut into Alcano's three-rack cushion and made it 6-4.

It was an intense battle between the two pool wizards in the 17th frame in this race-to-nine, alternate-break format that offers a top prize P500,000 to the champion.

After Guevarra tied the match at 8-all, Alcano opened with a soft break in the 17th rack and pocketed successfully the No. 2 and the No. 6 ball.

He missed the yellow No. 1 ball allowing Guevarra to take the rack.

In the next frame, Alcano opted for a safety shot with the No. 1 ball. Then Guevarra gunned down the No. 1 and No. 3 balls before he committed a mistake with the 5-9 combination.

"When I missed the 5-9 combination, that's where everything came apart for me," said Guevarra, who lost to fellow snooker player Elvis Calasang (9-4) in the opening round then beat Roel dela Cruz (9-5) in the second round.

Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Quit, Chiz tells Pichay, Puentevella

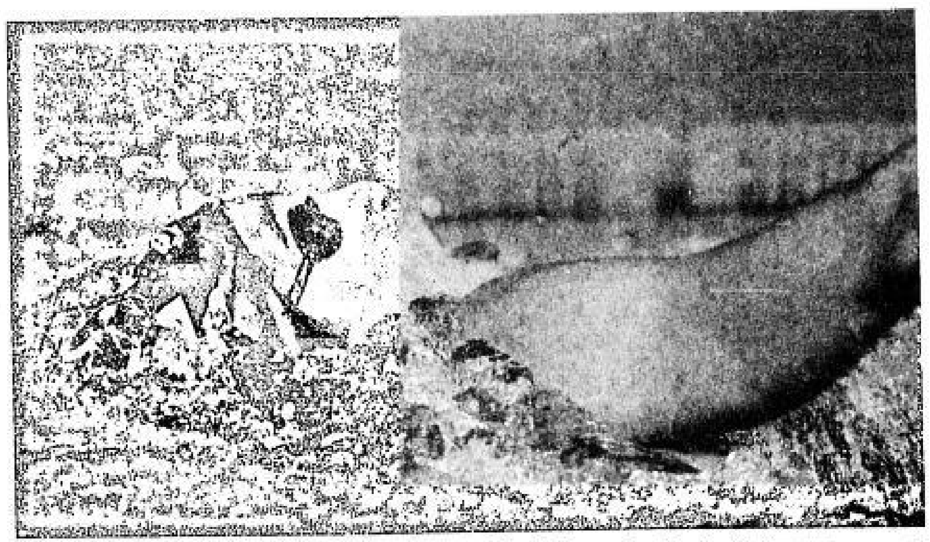
SENATORIAL CANDIDATE FRANCIS "CHIZ" Escudero yesterday challenged incumbent politicians to quit their sports designations and leave the national sports associations (NSAs) in the hands of private individuals.

Escudero, a three-term congressman from Sorsogon who is now eyeing a Senate seat under the banner of the Genuine Opposition, cited fellow senatorial bet Prospero Pichay and fellow representative Monico Puentevella, whom Escudero claimed to enjoy several advantages being lawmakers while leading their respective NSAs.

Pichay, who is running under the administration's Team Unity, is the president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) while Puentevella heads the Philippine Wrestling Federation (PWF).

"Just imagine, as congressmen they deliberate on the yearly budget and call Philippine Sports Commission officials to defend their budget," said Escudero. "But the next day they knock on the doors of the PSC to ask for their share of the budget."

Puentevella defended his involvement in sports, saying he's been an athlete and sports official for 30 years, long before he became a politician. Pichay couldn't be reached for comment at presstime.



MIGUEL Molina races in the men's 200 IM at the World Championships in Melbourne. AP

Molina gains Beijing spot

MIGUEL MOLINA BECAME THE FIRST FILIPINO to make it to the Beijing Olympics next year.

The 23-year-old Filipino swimming sensation secured an Olympic berth yesterday by surpassing the Olympic qualifying standard in the men's 200-meter individual medley during the World Championships being held in Melbourne, Australia.

His time of two minutes, 03.73 seconds was faster than the Games benchmark of 2:05.65 in his event. However, he finished fourth in the seventh of 10 heats and was ranked 24th overall.

The Fina website, however, made a correction on Molina's time and posted a 2:05.18 which also broke the Olympic standard.

The 200 IM was one of three events he won in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in Manila. He will be making his second trip to the Olympics after seeing action in the Athens 2004 Games.

Molina, who is studying at the University of California-Berkeley, posted the fourth Asian best time in the heats after two Japanese and a Chinese.

The Philippines is hoping to send seven swimmers to the Beijing Games including US-based tankers Jackie Pangilinan, JB Walsh and Erica Totten.

Marc Anthony Reyes

Guzman, RP trail by one in Thai Open

THAILAND—REGINA DE GUZMAN FIRED A three-under par 69 to trail by one stroke in the individual competition while Junior World champions Dottie Ardina and Cyna Rodriguez stood in second place in team play of the Thailand Ladies Amateur Open Golf Championship at the President Country Club on Suwintawong Road here yesterday.

The long-hitting de Guzman, who teamed up with Ardina to power the Philippines to a best-ever runner-up finish in the recent Queen Sirikit Cup at The Country Club, played a steady round over the 6,000-yard Robert Trent Jones-designed layout and matched Thai's Kurika Srisomrit 69 for a share of second place.

That was one stroke behind Thai Prae Paiboonpong, who flashed her familiarity with the short but tough layout to fire a 68 and take charge in the 54-hole tournament, which attracted over 100 players from eight nations.

Ardina, who posted six victories abroad last year, and Rodriguez carded 71s as the ICTSI-backed RP team trailed Thailand by one in the three-to-play, two-to-count format team event.

Mia Piccio, the third member of the ICTSI-backed RP squad, made a 73 and didn't count.

Srisomrit anchored Thailand's 141 in the team competition.

Malaysia had a 143 for third in team play while the other RP team of De Guzman and Paulina Sotto stood in fourth with a 145.

The other RP bets, however, struggled as Chihiro Ikeda shot a 73, Bambee de la Paz made a 77 and Linnel de Villa skied to an 81.

Lascuña misses British Open

SINGAPORE—TONY LASCUÑA OF THE PHILIPpines added a 70 yesterday to his opening 69 but failed to contend for a qualifying slot in the British Open at the Sentosa Golf Club here. Lascuña's 139 total was two strokes off the last slot of 137 secured by Australian Lee Won-joon. The first four berths went to Australia's Adam Groom at 135 (66-69), Lam Chih-Bing of Singapore 136 (70-66), Ross Bain of Scotland 136 (72-64) and David Gleeson of Australia 136 (68-68). Angelo Que proved the next best Filipino at 140 (70-70). Frankie Miñoza finished at 144 (72-72), Antonio Murakami at 147 (7077) and Cookie La'O at 151 (76-75). Juvic Pagunsan, who started with a 74, retired in the second round. *Asian Tour News*

SPORTSWATCH

Fernandez holds basketball clinic

THE RAMON FERNANDEZ BASKETBALL ACADEMY KICKS OFF ITS EIGHT-DAY summer clinic dubbed "Walk Tall Basketball Clinic" starting Apr. 11 at the Metro Sports Badminton Club's basketball court in Lahug, Cebu City. Fernandez, a three-time PBA MVP and named one of the PBA's 25 greatest players ever, will personally handle the clinic. The scheduled dates are Apr. 11, 12 and 13 and from Apr. 16 to 20. The clinics will run from 9 a.m. to noon. Fernandez's chief assistant in the clinic is Centro Escolar University's Deo Carillo, along with other RFBA trainers. The Walk Tall clinic will accept only the first 60 registrants, putting the trainer-student ratio at 1:15. "This is to ensure a more personalized supervision in order to correct the kid's weaknesses and to address them promptly and properly with the right drills," said Fernandez, who got support from Arthro and the Metro Sports Badminton Club for the project. Fee is pegged at P3,000, which includes 1 El Presidente Sportivo basketball, 2 training shirts and a Certificate of Attendance. For inquiries, text/call 0920-9616550 or 422-3682.

Coach E-MCU to cater to Camanava area

COACH E BASKETBALL SCHOOL IS GAINING A FOOTHOLD IN NORTHERN Metro Manila as it announced a partnership with Manila Central University (MCU) in Caloocan City for classes this summer. oach E Basketball School founder and Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) champion coach Eric Altamirano said personalized, progressive and scientific basketball training will be available to Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas and Valenzuela residents starting April 11 and May 9. For schedules and fees, call 631-1195 or 0921-7562639 during office hours from Mondays to Fridays or log-on to iba_phil@yahoo.com and www.ibaphil.net.

MRT backs Summer Camps

METRO RAIL TRANSIT (MRT) HAVE AGREED TO GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE Fil-Estate Sports Foundation, Inc. Summer Tennis Camps beginning March 31 at the Manila Southwoods Sports Club in Carmona, Cavite. FESFI chair Robert John L. Sobrepeña lauded the support given by MRT to the Summer Tennis Camps, saying their assistance will go a long way in "fulfilling the foundation's long-term goal of producing world-class athletes in sports where the Fipinos can truly excel. Former RP Davis Cup team captain Manny Tecson will handle the Summer Tennis Camps. Tecson will conductclasses at Manila Southwoods Sports Club in Carmona, Cavite, from March 31 to April 25 and May 5 to May 30. Rates are P3,500 for beginners and intermediate/advance and P5,500 for fulltime/competitive. For inquiries, call Manny/Linda Tecson at 938-9522/939-4851 or Jerry Tripulca at 0915-2039505 or 0917-8981516.

Bicol Chess Championship moves on

REGISTRATION IS STILL ON GOING FOR THE CAMARINES NORTE LEG OF THE 2007 Region V (Bicol) Chess Championship to be held March 31 - April 2 at the Provincial Capitol, Daet City, Camarines Norte. Contact Project Director Willie Abalos at 0920-4871453 or Carmelita Abanes 0920-4328200. The 7-round Swiss System tournament, organized by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines headed by Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero A. Pichay Jr. and Secretary General Tagyatay City Mayor Abraham N. Tolentino, kicked off at the Albay Provincial Capitol Building March 17-19 followed by the Camarines Sur Leg at the LCC Shopping Mall in Naga City March 24–26.

Iligan/NCFP Open up March 30

REGISTRATION IS STILL GOING ON FOR THE ILIGAN/ NCFP OPEN CHESS Championship to be held March 30 – April 3 at Lanao Chung Hua School Gymnasium, Palao, Iligan City. A joint project of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) and the Iligan City Government, this tournament offers a total prize of P220,000 with the champion receiving P75,000 Contact Iligan City Sports Director Freddie Siao (063) 2237763, 0920-9620500 Willie Abalos 0920-4871453 or the NCFP Office 536-8507 or e-mail NCFPsecretariat@yahoo.com

GT series joins Yokohama at Manila Autoshow

THE 2007 PETRON-SAN MIG COFFEE PHILIPPINE GT CHAMPIONSHIP ORGAnized by the Batangas Racing Circuit Association joins Yokohama Tires in the Manila Autoshow today until April 1 at the World Trade Center in Pasay City. The show will serve as a soft launching of the four-round 2007 GT Championship showcasing competing cars using Yokohama Tires. The kickoff leg is slated May 19-20 while the other races are tentatively scheduled on June 9-10, Aug. 11-12 and the championship round on Sept. 22-23. Yokohama Tires has proven its durability in the 2006 San Mig Coffee-Petron Blaze Philippine Touring Car Championships. Yokohama is the official tire of the 2007 Petron-San Mig Coffee Philippine GT Championship series, specifically for the GT200 and GT125 classes. For inquiries, log on at www.batangasracingcircuit.com or contact the Batangas Racing Circuit c/o Rodini Rivera or Nelson Gayola at (632) 817-2241, 729-5365 or fax 815-1241.

Round 2 of Heritage derby today

ROUND TWO OF THE FIRST EVER HERITAGE CUP 8-COCK/BULLSTAG DERBY gets going today at the Araneta Coliseum with 85 matches lined up. The first fight sizzles at 3 p.m. The opening round last Tuesday was dominated by Bicol breeder Teng Ranola (ALT Oragon) who scored a perfect score of four points. Louie Madlambayan and Edwin Jingco (LDM Dominator) tallied 3.5 points while the entries of former Congressman Peping Cojuangco, Serge Jimenez and Eugene Tan posted three wins each. Breeders belonging to the United Gamecock Breeders Association (UGBA) may still join the following elimination schedules at Araneta Coliseum: April 10, 12, 17, 19 and 24. Finals will be on April 26. In the provinces, eliminations will be staged at Luna Cockpit Isabela/ NELBA (April 9); Gallera de Mandaue/Cegba (April 21); Matina Gallera and Aquino Coliseum/ Salpukan (April 20 and 21) and Panguil Bay (April 14). For details, call 0920-5851940 (Taz Lunasco).

Fastest Win event at Las Piñas Coliseum

LAS PIÑAS COLISEUM'S FASTEST WIN ONE-COCK TIMBANGAN, A WEEKLY SEries followed by thousand of game aficionados of Metro Manila, resumes at noon today with 70 fights on tap. Last week, the Vigan entry of Otoy Abarsosa posted the fastest winning time of 10.27 seconds. The overall fastest win champion will get a six cu. ft. refrigerator while the second placer gets a 14" color TV. The LPC management also announced the staging of another 3-cock event on Saturday with Maruel Terroblas as host. For details, call 8731040 and 8743910.

Abdon hits ace, lifts Riviera

LIPA, BATANGAS—JOHN KIER ABDON HIT an ace on a par-4, made a 29 on the front nine and went on to shoot a six-under-par 66 that powered Riviera 1 to a five-point lead in Division I of the Jungolf Interclub championships at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club course here.

Using a Titleist 905s driver and a Titleist Pro-V1x ball, the 15-year-old Abdon holed his drive from the blue tee on the 289–yard, par-4 No. 7 of Malarayat's Mt. Lobo side to highlight one of the best scores in jungolf history.

Riviera 1 posted a 235 aggregate counting the 81 of Beverly Mendoza and the 88 of Maan Legaspi. Nicklas Ekegren's 91 didn't count

Wolen Superal, Bino dela paz and Sonny Villaber tallied 80s that enabled ICSTI 1 to claim second place at 240, four ahead of ICSTI 2 which was led by Sarah Jane Ababa.

Aguinaldo 3 and Riviera 3 opened up hefty margins in Divisions II and III, respectively.

JOHN KIER ABDON: An ace and a sizzling 66

Sta. Elena Cup extended

THE 11TH EDITION OF THE Sta. Elena Cup member-guest tournament was extended to six days to make way for its biggest-ever field of 500 players.

Deviating from its traditional Thursday start, the Sta. Elena Cup teed off on Tuesday with the first batch of 50 teams accommodated from the wait list availing of the additional two days.

A Mercedes Benz B-Class, a Chrysler Town and Country van and a Yamaha Drive golf car are at stake as hole-in-one prizes. Raffle items include an Omega Watch and a Caribbean Cruise.

Jesus Pineda Jr. and Enzo Martinez are the defending overall champion while Kevin Tayao and Raymund Sangil are the reigning low gross titlists.

Dandan, Dy stay alive

By Marc Anthony Reyes

ONLY KYLE JOSHUA DANDAN AND DENISE Dy were left to carry the national cause after two rounds of the 18th Mitsubishi Lancer International junior tennis championships yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Dandan, the highest Filipino seed at 13th, booted out compatriot Mark Jaypee Balce, 6-2, 6-0, to advance against the third seeded Taiwanese Hsien Yeng-peng.

The ninth-seeded Dy humbled a taller and bigger American Krista Damico, 6-2, 7-5, to set up a third-round match against Thai Noppawan Lertcheewakarn, who bundled out RP teammate Noelle Conchita Zoleta.

"It's going to be tough but I will be coming out fighting to the end," said Dandan who is on his last season as a junior player.

Dandan expressed optimism of his chances against Hsien, who whitewashed New Zealand's Sebastian Lavie, 6-0, 6-0.

"He's a good player but I already beat him once so I think I have a good chance tomorrow (today)," added Dandan, ranked 118 among the world juniors.

A regular practice partner of the RP Davis Cup team, Dandan owns a 6-3, 6-2 win over Peng during the junior Davis Cup tie in 2005 held at the Manila Polo Club. They have a 1-1 head-to-head record.

Dy, who is also turning 18 this year, also has a 1-1 personal record against the seventh seed Noppawan, who broke the hearts of local fans when she showed Zoleta the door, 6-1, 6-4.

Meanwhile, Raymond Villarete's run from the qualifying to the first round ended against top seed Australian John Patrick Smith, who scored an easy 6-3, 6-2 win.

Pablo Olivarez II ran out of steam and lost to Sweden's Rasmus Jonasson, 6-1, 7-6, while Ralph Kevin Barte failed to measure up to the superb plays of 8th seed Eugen Bradzil, 6-3, 6-3.

Triathletes cop 3 golds

By Jasmine Payo

THE PHILIPPINES RELINquished its Asian duathlon crown, but August Benedicto and Monica Torres made up for the misfortune by sweeping the Under-23 category in the Mekong River International Duathlon at Mukdahan, Thailand.

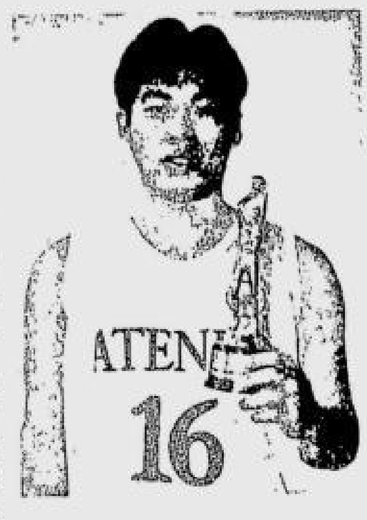
Veteran racer Ani de Leon made it a three-gold finish for the Philippines after ruling the Sprint Open category in the triathlon competition of the multi-sports festival over the weekend.

Ryan Mendoza, the 2006 Asian Duathlon Champion, registered a time of one hour, 53 minutes and six seconds to finish nearly two minutes behind Japan's Yuya Fukaura at 1:51:24.

Still, Mendoza impressively finished fourth overall behind Russia's Yakovle Sergey (1:50:48), Fukaura and Australia's Rafael Baugh (1:52:09).

Tom Carrasco, president of the Triathlon Association of the Philippines, said Ryan and August beat the other Southeast Asian bets in the field. An indication of their preparedness for the coming SEA Games in Thailand.

CHAMPS: Players and officials of Apo Floors celebrate after winning the MBT 1st Conference Division D title recently.



MVP: Terence Tang of Team Novales, older brother of La Salle Green Archers point guard TY Tang, displays his trophy after being named MVP (most valuable player) in the Ignacio Ramos (Open) division of the just concluded Ateneo Basketball League. Tang, who averaged 29 points and 9.8 rebounds, fired 33 in the finals against Team Gepuela which bagged the title.

Nike camp tomorrow

THE COUNTRY'S TOP 80 HIGH school cagers, led by Joshua David Webb of De La Salle Zobel, hone up their skills in the Nike Elite Basketball Camp starting tomorrow at the Brent International School in Mamplasan, Laguna.

"We believe in these kids," said project director Alex Compton. "We're promising you, you'll see a lot of them as UAAP, NCAA and PBL stars, and eventually as stars in the PBA."

Former PBA coach Eric Altamirano and San Beda Cubs mentor Ato Badolato joined Compton in selecting the standouts from over 500 aspirants.

The camp has lined up skills development lessons, scrimmages, truth talk sessions and all-star games. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Office of the President of the Philippines
PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT STAFF
Malacañang

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Office of the President - Presidential Management Staff (OP-PMS), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites all interested Phil-GEPS registered suppliers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of the following:

Name of Project : **Lot -1 Supply and Delivery of Commonly-Used Office Suppliers and Materials for the PMS Central Office**
Location : PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
Brief Description : To supply and deliver commonly-used office supplies and materials for the PMS Central Office
Approved Budget For the Contract : One Million One Hundred Thirty Five Thousand Pesos (Php 1,135,000.00)
Contract Duration : One (1) year
Delivery Period : 15 May 2007

Name of Project : **Lot-1 Supply and Delivery of Computer Supplies for the PMS Central Office**
Location : PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
Brief Description : To supply and deliver computer supplies for the PMS Central Office
Approved Budget For the Contract : One Million One Hundred Eighty Five Thousand Pesos (Php 1,185,000.00)
Contract Duration : One (1) year
Delivery Period : 15 May 2007

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Instruction to Bidders. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule/Time/Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	29 March 2007 to 11 April 2007
2. Pre-bid Conference	11 April 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
3. Submission of eligibility requirements	23 April 2007, 1:00 PM at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
4. Opening of Bids	23 April 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 1,500.00) to the PMS Cashier.

Only the bids of eligible bidders shall be opened in the presence of the bidders or their duly authorized representatives, as evidenced by the Special Power of Attorney or Board resolution. The opening of bids shall be done right after the checking of the eligibility requirements.

The PMS reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any minor defects therein, to annul the bidding process, to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to accept only the offer that is most advantageous to the government.

The PMS assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) **ASSEC. ELIZABETH M. GONZALES**
Chairperson, PMS - BAC

Manila, March 27, 2007

(PDI—March 29, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
RAKSO COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, INC. G/F All Seasons Bldg., 112 Aguirre St. Legaspi Village, Makati City	Nam Hwi Kim	Team Leader, Program Developer
KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 18/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Kie Nam Lee	Manager, Personnel & General Affairs Department
RAGA ONE2ONE CORP. Unit 504 Alpap II Bldg., Trade St. cor. Investment Drive, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Yong Hyung Kim	Customer Support Manager
SEOJUNEKOREA INC. Rm. 402 Executive Center, 1920 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila	Soontae Park	Operation Manager
APOLLO LIGHTINGS ENTERPRISE 34 SM Annex, SM City, Fairview, Quezon City	Mien Sung Wang	General Manager
PT KALBE FARMA TBK Chatham House, 31 B. Valero St. cor. Rufino St., Salcedo Village Makati City	Erwin	Brand Manager
PHIL-KOREA LANGUAGE ACADEMY INC. Unit 2D 2/F 539 Pacific Place Bldg., Arquiza St., Ermita, Manila	Eun Jung Choi (w/o Park)	President
PERCEPTION GAMING INC. 24/F 6750 Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chun-Lung Huang	Treasurer
NOON KOREAN ICE CREAM CORP. Unit 1622 Asiawealth Tower, 1836 Leveriza St., Pasay City	Jong Yun Kim	General Manager
KDDI PHILIPPINES CORPORATION Unit 1804, Antel 2000 Corporate Centre, 121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Takao Umehara	Chairman of the Board and President

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

The DOLE will conduct a Seminar-Workshop on Strengthening of Private Recruitment and Placement Agency (PRPA) for local Employment on Friday, 30 March 2007. For details, please inquire at 400-6011 and 339-2016.

(PDI-March 28, 2007)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632)920-6401* (632)920-6446
E-mail: member_relations@sss.gov.ph *Website http://www.sss.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid
IAEB No.2007-008-Goods

SSS SELF-SERVICE INFORMATION TERMINALS
(THIS IS A RE-PUBLICATION)

Supply, delivery and set-up into operational state fifty (50) units Self-Service Information Terminals and one (1) unit Management Server

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) intends to apply the sum of P10,355,902.64 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the above proposed equipment, consisting of the following:

	Item Description	Amount	Source of Fund
Item#1	Hardware & Software	P 8,114,278.64	CY2007 Interim Budget for Information Terminals
Item#2	3-year Maintenance Service	P 2,241,624.00	Budget for Operating Expenditures-M/R Computer Equipment
	TOTAL	P 10,355,902.64	

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SSS now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the supply, delivery and set-up into operational state the required hardware and software. Supply, delivery and installation of the GOODS are required within sixty **(60) calendar days** after contract signing/receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP). The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section I of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a **non-refundable fee of P10,000.00**. The method of payment will be on a cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg., Ground floor, upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-6. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The SSS will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **April 13, 2007 at 2:30p.m.**, Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on **April 27, 2007 not later than 2:00p.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be held on **April 27, 2007 at 2:00p.m.**, Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.
9. The ***SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM*** reserves the right to accept or reject any or all Bids without offering any reason, waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel # 922-2991; 924-7380; 920-6401 local 5491
Email - bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number - (02) 924-7380

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI – March 29, 2007)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan
Telephone (6347) 935-4004; 561-2451 Fax (6347) 935-6046

PEZA

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY-BATAAN ECONOMIC ZONE (PEZA-BEZ) through its Corporate Budget for CY 2006 intends to apply the sum of **Php 2,240,000.00** being the **Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)** to payments under the contract for the **Consultancy Work on the Conceptualization, Development and Implementation of Bataan Economic Zone's Integrated Solid Waste Management System** located at the Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The PEZA-BEZ now calls for the submission of **Letter of Intent (LOI)** together with a certified copy of the **G-EPS Certificate of Registration & BIR efps Enrollment Certificate** from potential bidders on March 29 to April 11, 2007, to apply for eligibility after payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 200.00 at the Finance Division, Ground Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan and if found eligible, to bid for the above mentioned project. The deadline for submission of the accomplished Eligibility Documents shall be on April 18, 2007 at 5:00 P.M. at the BAC Secretariat, EMD Office, Ground Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, as specified in Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183). Only Bids from Bidders who pass eligibility check will be opened. The process of the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **Eligibility Documents (ED)**. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZ and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by Bidders that passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 2,000.00. The method of payment for Bid Documents will be on a **cash basis only**. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative from May 02 to 07, 2007.
6. The PEZA-BEZ will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on May 14, 2007, 2:00 P.M. at the Audio Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan.
7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before 1:30 P.M. of May 28, 2007. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Manager's Check, Cashier's Check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of not less than Php 22,400.00, Bank Guarantee in the amount of not less than Php 33,600.00, or in the form of Surety Bond in the amount of not less than Php 56,000.00. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid Opening shall be on May 28, 2007 at 2:00 P.M. at the Audio Visual Room 2nd floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representative who choose to attend.
8. Completion of the Works is required within 120 Calendar Days after the issuance of Notice to Proceed.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA-BEZ reserves the right to accept any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority-BEZ
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
Ground Floor, EMD Office, BEZ
Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan
Tel. Nos. (047) 935-4008; (047) 935-5002 / Fax No. (047) 935-6046
E-mail – bez_bac@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **DIONISIO T. SAMEN**
BEZ-BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **DANTE M. QUINDOZA**
Zone Administrator

(PDI–March 29 & April 7, 2007)

MICHAEL Phelps continues to prove that he's a class on his own, surprising even himself in winning the 200m butterfly final in world record fashion. REUTERS

Phelps rips another swim mark in 'Worlds'

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—AMERICAN Michael Phelps did it again, setting his second world record in as many nights.

He was joined in the world record parade Wednesday at the world swimming championships by fellow American Leila Vaziri and Laure Manaudou of France.

Phelps broke the 200-meter butterfly in a time of 1 minute, 52.09 seconds. It bettered his own mark of 1:53.71 set on February 17 of this year in Columbia, Missouri.

"I surprised myself, I went so fast," said Phelps. "I wanted to go 52.00 but I didn't expect to swim 52.00.

"I'm showing I'm in solid shape now. I had a really good swim earlier in the season where I broke the world record. I wanted to take it out tonight, so I'm pretty happy."

Wu Peng of China took the silver and Nikolay Skvortsov of Russia was third.

Vaziri set the world 50-meter backstroke record in a semifinal. Her time of 28.16 seconds broke the previous mark of 28.19 set by Janine Pietsch of Germany in Berlin on May 25, 2005.

Manaudou, who won the 400 freestyle gold Sunday, set her new mark in the 200-meter freestyle, finishing in 1:55.52, breaking a 24-hour-old record set by Italian Federica Pellegrini of 1:56.47 in Tuesday's semifinals.

Second-place finisher Annika Lurz of Germany also bettered Pellegrini's record, finishing in 1:55.68 Wednesday. Pellegrini took third place in the final in a time of 1:56.97.

Manaudou, talking to French television, said she was inspired by the world record performances by others Wednesday.

"I told myself I had to have one, too," said Manaudou, who pulled out of the 50-meter backstroke semifinal two races earlier Wednesday to conserve her strength for the 200 freestyle.

Just as he did in winning the 200 freestyle in this edition of the Worlds, Phelps raced to the lead and stayed there, touching in one minute, 52.09 seconds.

Phelps simply crushed his rivals, beating Wu by 3.04 seconds. Phelps already owned the seven fastest times in history in the event.

The 21-year-old American was under world-record pace the entire race, and extended his lead at every turn.

At 100 meters, he dipped 1.65 seconds under his mark and stretched it to an amazing 1.78 seconds through 150 meters as fans in Rod Laver Arena cheered louder and louder.

Phelps was going so fast, the red line that tracks world record pace was actually behind him. Phelps is 3-for-3, with victories in the 400 freestyle relay, the 200 free and 200 fly. *AP*

Cavs book playoff slot; Sonics score

INDIANAPOLIS—LEBRON JAMES had 26 points, seven rebounds and six assists, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Indiana Pacers 105-94 to clinch a NBA playoff berth on Tuesday.

Zydrunas Ilgauskas scored 23 points for the Cavaliers, who shot 52 percent from the field and pulled within 2½ games of Detroit in the race for the top seed in the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Jermaine O'Neal led Indiana with 32 points on 11-for-18 shooting.

Danny Granger scored 22 points and Jamaal Tinsley had 15 points and 12 assists for the Pacers, who have lost two straight home games and 15 of 17 overall.

In Oklahoma City, Josh Howard had 25 points and 10 rebounds, and Dallas beat New Orleans, 105-89, the Mavericks' 21st straight victory over the Hornets.

The Hornets haven't beaten Dallas since the turn of the century, the longest losing streak for one team against an opponent in the NBA, NFL, NHL or Major League Baseball. The Mavericks' last loss in the series came on Nov. 17, 1999, in Charlotte.

Devin Harris added 14 points for Dallas, which completed a perfect six-game road trip and won its seventh straight overall. The Mavericks already became the first NBA team ever to notch three winning streaks of 12 games or more in a season, and they're past halfway on their way to another one.

MEMPHIS center Pau Gasol reaches for a rebound against the Lakers. REUTERS

In Minneapolis, Rashard Lewis scored 21 of his 35 points in the fourth quarter, Earl Watson set a career high with 24 points, and Seattle overcame a 25-point second-half deficit to beat Minnesota, 114-106.

Two days after its worst defeat of the season—a 41-point loss to San Antonio—Seattle refused to be routed again and finished the game on a 25-2 run.

Minnesota, which entered the game 3½ games back of the eighth playoff spot in the Western Conference, nearly got a triple-double from Kevin Garnett, but it wasn't enough to keep the Wolves from the largest blown lead in team history.

Garnett finished with 20 points, 12 rebounds and nine assists. Ricky Davis led the Wolves with 21 points.

In Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant's string of outstanding games came to an ugly end, and the Los Angeles Lakers suffered an embarrassing loss to the NBA's worst team, the Memphis Grizzlies, 88-86.

Bryant, who had scored at least 40 points in five straight games, including 50 in the first four, shot 7-of-26 and scored only 23.

Rookie Tarence Kinsey scored five of his career-high 24 points in the last minute, and fellow rookie Rudy Gay had 20 points and a career-high 12 rebounds in leading Memphis to victory.

Junior Harrington had 13 points, eight rebounds and eight assists, and Pau Gasol added 10 points, 16 rebounds and seven assists for the Grizzlies, whose 18-54 record is the NBA's worst, as is their 6-30 road record. *AP*

Old ghosts come back to haunt top seeds Federer, Sharapova

FEDERER AFP

SHARAPOVA AP

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—Rematches became repeats for Roger Federer and Maria Sharapova at the Sony Ericsson Open on Tuesday.

Both lost.

Guillermo Canas upset top-ranked Federer for the second time this month, 7-6 (2), 2-6, 7-6 (5) in a fourth-round epic.

Serena Williams beat Sharapova, 6-1, 6-1, in a rout reminiscent of their Australian Open final two months ago.

With that, Key Biscayne's two No. 1-seeded players were eliminated.

Two weeks ago, Canas ended Federer's 41-match winning streak at Indian Wells. The dogged Argentine showed the victory was no fluke, extending points by repeatedly chasing down shots and forcing a frustrated Federer into 51 unforced errors.

"It's one of those matches I never should have lost," Federer said.

The defeat ended his bid for a third successive Key Biscayne title, while Canas improved to 3-0 this year against top-10 players. He was ranked as high as No. 8 before serving a 15-month doping suspension, and he had to qualify for the Key Biscayne draw. He's the first qualifier in nine years to reach the quarterfinals.

"I beat No. 1 two times in a row. I don't know what is my secret," Canas said. "I'm just trying to enjoy the moment. For me it's like a dream."

Williams, who defeated Sharapova, 6-1, 6-2, in the Australian Open final, this time won even more easily. She bristled when asked if she expected such an easy rematch.

"Haven't you learned that I expect the best of myself?" she said. "If I'm playing well, then anything can happen. I believe there could be a similar score if I'm playing well."

While Sharapova and Federer lost, Andy Roddick won his rematch against David Ferrer. The Spaniard was an upset winner when they played at Key Biscayne a year ago, but this time the third-seeded Roddick won, 7-5, 6-3, to reach the quarterfinals.

No. 2 Rafael Nadal defeated 18-year-old Argentine Juan Martin del Potro, 6-0, 6-4.

Sixth-seeded Tommy Robredo of Spain took nearly three hours to finish off Radek Stepanek of the Czech Republic, 7-6 (4), 5-7, 7-6 (3), and No. 12 Andy Murray of Britain overcame two match points to beat Paul-Henri Mathieu of France, 2-6, 7-5, 6-3. Murray faces Roddick next. Croatia's Ivan Ljubicic, last year's runner-up, fired 13 aces in beating Finland's Jarkko Nieminen, 7-6 (4), 6-4, and set up a quarterfinal with Argentina's Juan Ignacio Chela.

Top-ranked Justine Henin reached the Key Biscayne semifinals for the first time by beating No. 6-seeded Nadia Petrova, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (4). Henin's opponent on Thursday will be another Russian, No. 9 Anna Chakvetadze, who beat No. 15 Li Na of China, 4-6, 7-5, 6-2. *AP*

Sidelights

World-class tennis action at the
18th Mitsubishi Lancer
International Junior Tennis Championship

The 18th Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championship's welcome dinner was held last Wednesday at the Grand Ballroom of the Century Park Hotel. After a sumptuous buffet dinner, the junior netters gladly showcased their unique off-court talents to all the guests.

Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. officials also had fun as they watched the teen players feast and frolic. The night was made livelier by the groovy sounds of the Powerhouse band – James Monseratte, Michelle Peregrina and Patty Ragaza on vocals, Dennis Catli on keyboards, JP Octavo of drums and Regie Gutierrez on lead guitar.

Items such as Rudy Project Ralliart shades, Ralliart bags and apparel were raffled off to lucky attendees of the party – the people from ACCEL, Sunkist Iced Tea, Universal Robina Corp., Bridgestone Tires and Wilson Balls.

The affair (which should have ended by 9:30 p.m.) went into overtime as the junior netters – particularly those who've been eliminated in the 1st round – partied the night away.

Top seed John Patrick Smith (ranked 17th) is playing his last year as a junior. Smith reached the round of sixteen in last year's tournament. This year, he's hoping to go further.

In his last match, Smith defeated Raymond Villarte of the Philippines in straight sets. He is now en-route to a third round meeting (scheduled today) against India's Yuki Bhambri.

"I hope to do good this year. I have not played Bhambri before and I do not know what to expect. But I want to be optimistic," sad the 18 year old from Townsville, Australia.

What is keeping Smith – who may well be following the footsteps of the former Lancer tournament standout Lleyton Hewitt – on top of the situation is the hot Philippine weather, which is somewhat similar to Queensland's weather today.

"It is also hot in our place, and I am not complaining. And I love your courts here, this is my favorite surface."

This tournament is Smith's sixth this year, including the Australian Open Juniors where he reached the quarterfinals.

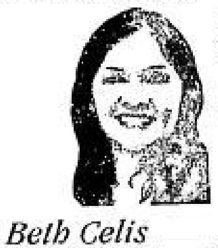
"So far, I am happy with the way I am playing. And this year, being my last in the juniors, I want to come up with a very good performance in all my tournaments."

Final matches will be aired on Solar Sports, April 8, 5:00pm – 7:00pm.
Replay on April 14, 10:00am -12:00pm

MITSUBISHI MOTORS

Caguioa: RP 5 has winning attitude

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

GINEBRA CAGER Mark Caguioa was lying on the bench when we arrived at the Moro Lorenzo gym where the national team was having its last workout prior to its departure for Carson City in Los Angeles.

It was the eve of the US trip and the team was undergoing one of the toughest conditioning exercises to test their fitness.

By the time they finished the running drills, Mark was out of breath, nauseous, and his knees were giving in.

"It was a hard workout, Mark will just catch his breath, rest a while and he'll join you for the interview," said Mark's manager Danny Espiritu who happened to be there.

* * *

I was actually wary of interviewing Mark since he has a reputation of not being too nice to the press.

They say he's rude and couldn't care less what people say or think of him.

I decided to suspend judgment, however, until I had personally talked to him. Being the best player of the PBA today and probably the most popular at that, I wanted to know what makes him tick.

* * *

Mark the Spark was fully energized when he joined us for the television interview in an air-conditioned room.

I did not detect any of the negative traits. He was very nice and polite and even had a keen sense of humor. He said we could talk about anything that struck my fancy. He had nothing to hide.

Naturally, I took him up on the offer. I asked if he's about to follow the footsteps of teammate Rudy Hatfield who is tying the knot this August.

Mark said that while he's very happy with Lauren, his girlfriend of three years, they have not made any nuptial plans as yet. But one of these days, they might.

"Lauren has been taking very good care of me. I have no eyes for any other girl," Mark said.

* * *

Mark said he's often mistaken for a snob because he's not "*palabati*".

"Having lived in the United States, I don't know the people I have to greet or pay homage to even if I bump into them. I'm not a snob, but I'm not plastic either. I won't greet you just for the sake of greeting you."

All throughout the interview which lasted for more than 30 minutes, Mark spoke in fluent Tagalog. You can see this for yourself when the portion is aired over RPN's Newswatch today at 5:30 p.m. and tomorrow, same time.

* * *

No, he does not get *pikon* when fans tease him as an Allan K lookalike.

"I guess they say that because we're both *pango*. But aren't most of us Filipinos? I only look *pango* from this angle, but not in this," he said, turning to his side.

I agreed.

* * *

When it comes to his career, Mark is very professional, dedicated and serious.

And he feels very optimistic about the Philippine team's forthcoming international assignments. While he admits he has no idea of the caliber of the opposition in the Fiba-Asia Men's championship, he feels we can beat anybody, "if we put our hearts and mind into it."

"The team has a winning attitude," he said, as he pointed out that he, for one, will never strive for anything less than the championship.

"If you're only aiming for second or third place, might as well not play at all."

IN THIS ISSUE

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- **PNOC unit to use algae** as biodiesel source /B8

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BUSINESS

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Swabe ang dating,
lakas ng hatak!
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Import lib takes its toll on Chemphil

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo and Neville Isdell, chair of The Coca-Cola Co., show a miniature scale model of the school building being donated by the American company to various provinces in the country, during a courtesy call on her Wednesday at Malacañang.

Firm to shut down soap ingredients factory

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE CHEMPHIL GROUP YESTERDAY SAID IT was closing down next month its soap ingredients unit following the trade department's "surprising" move of not allowing a safeguard duty on competing imports.

Alexandra Garcia-Verzosa, Chemphil chief operating office and director, said CAWC Inc.'s plants in Pasig City would be shut down "not later than May 30" because the government decision spelled the firm's death.

"We have been in shutdown mode since 2005 when imports of technical grade STPP [or sodium tripolyphosphates] increased significantly, cutting down prices below our costs," Verzosa said.

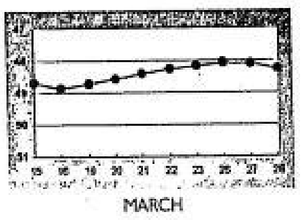
Formerly Chemphil Albright and Wilson Corp. until Chemphil bought out the Albright and Wilson shares in 2003, CAWC is the country's pioneer and sole producer of STPP, which is used to make soap and detergents.

"All we need is three years with the safeguard, or for however long it takes us to become competitive

IMPORT/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



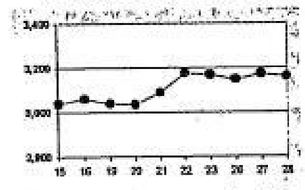
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P48.255 = $1

As of 5 p.m., March 28, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

More OFW funds flowing to richer households

By Doris C. Dumlao

NEARLY FOUR OUT OF FIVE FILIPINO households that benefit from overseas remittances are now middle and high-income families, which means that more funds may be flowing toward savings and investment rather than outright consumption, the International Monetary Fund said yesterday.

In its March 2007 country report, the IMF said the currently weak linkage between remittances and investments in the Philippines could change in the future as more affluent households become beneficiaries of overseas Filipino workers remittances.

"In the Philippines, the investment ratio has steadily declined since the Asian crisis, thus it is clear that the increase in remittances has not increased investment thus far," the IMF said.

In 1991, the IMF report noted that nearly 60 percent of families in the Philippines who considered their main income source as coming from abroad came from the bottom two quartiles (referring to four equal groups into which a population can be divided) based on income distribution.

"By 2003, this share had dropped to just under 18 percent, implying that the share of families in the top two brackets counting income abroad as their main source of income rose from 40 percent to 82 percent," the IMF said.

"The most likely interpretation of this fact is that the skill set of remitters has shifted exogenously and there are both 'pull' and 'push' factors taking higher skilled workers abroad," the IMF said.

Based on the Family Incomes and Expenditures Surveys (FIES) conducted by the National Statistics Office, the bottom two quartiles or brackets are defined as those having incomes under P50,000 and P100,000, respectively. The third quartile has income between P100,000 and P250,000 and the top bracket has income over P250,000.

"Given that some 80 percent of families

MORE OFW/ B2

Stocks close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.38-PERCENT lower yesterday as they tracked Wall Street's overnight weaker performance, dealers said.

The composite index fell 11.94 points to 3,162.81 after moving between 3,153.73 and 3,176.87.

The broader all-share index shed 10.08 points to 2,023.32.

Losers outnumbered gainers 68 to 30, while 64 stocks were unchanged. A total of 3.7 billion shares worth P3.3 billion changed hands.

STOCKS/ B3

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Initial fabric offering

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

WITH ITS P9-BILLION IN RESOURCES, THE Philippine National Reinsurance Corp., which officially calls itself "PhilNaRE," is going public. Finally!

Perhaps, renewed public interest in the stock market inspired four companies (including PhilNaRE) to line up at the Philippine Stock Exchange to do IPOs.

That means, for the sake of Sen. Lito Lapid, initial public offering, and they are selling shares to the public. Yes, boss, including you!

Now here's the deal on PhilNaRE: As a reinsurance firm, meaning, it offers "insurance" to insurance companies, it is a virtual monopoly.

A check with the PSE showed that the company was actually a remnant of martial law, created by Presidential Decree No. 1270.

In effect, the PD required all—and I mean, "ALL"—insurance companies here to give to PhilNaRE at least 10 percent of what they would reinsure abroad. Hmm.

Well, PhilNaRE is the very fabric of the insurance business. Out of the 125 insurance companies in the country today, it gets business from 110.

I mean, how could such a company keep itself hidden from the public for a long time, so much so that only the big boys saw its promise?

Although it started with a P10-million capital chipped in by all the insurance companies, the Ayala and the Yuchengco groups are now its major shareholders, together with the GSIS.

A few years ago, Malayan Reinsurance (Yuchengco) and Universal Reinsurance (Ayala) merged with PhilNaRE, which thus became the only local reinsurance firm.

Survival was the reason behind the consolidation, because to compete with the foreign reinsurance companies, local reinsurance firms would have to be big.

OK, the consolidation brought up PhilNaRE's net worth to P3.8 billion (about $80 million), but it is still a pygmy in the region. Its competitor MNRB Holdings of Malaysia, for instance, has a capital of $213 million.

The forthcoming IPO of PhilNaRE should increase its capital by P2 to P3 billion, bringing it closer to its P7-billion target.

Now, for the information of Richard Gomez, life insurance premium in the country amounted to P47 billion in 2005; and the non-life, some P28 billion.

This PhilNaRE thus garnered P4 billion worth of business from the local insurance firms that year, posting a net income of P275 million.

And it had only 92 employees, mind you!

Is this a big racket, *este*, "business" *pala*, or what? And PhilNaRE, again, is a virtual monopoly. It also happens to have captive business. By law!

* * *

OK, THE SURVEYS tell a story, but they do not tell us what really happens on the day of the elections itself. They talk about public preference, sure. It's just that elections in this country are not only about public choice.

I mean, no survey technique known to man can ever indicate the effect of something like "political machinery" on election results.

That's exactly what this cute administration's senatorial bets are talking about, when they boast in media about support from local governments.

Each one of those thousands of governors, congressmen, mayors, councilors, and barangay officials has his or her loyal diehard political forces, which the so-called political machinery can always harness.

Thus, if the surveys show that the administration senatorial bets are within reach of the "magic 12," it will likely be a tough fight for the opposition.

But that's just how it is!

* * *

ALL THAT noise on the problem of the Department of Foreign Affairs about "passport," apparently, has something to do with a multibillion-peso deal.

At stake is the supply of "security paper" for making the passports issued by the DFA—now at P500 each. No fixer required!

And the name of a certain "FC" always comes up in the coffeeshop talk about the supply.

Word has it that the group of "FC" made a headway into the security paper business with government offices during the administration of President Fidel "Kuya Eddie" Ramos.

A member of the "shadow cabinet" at that time introduced the father of "FC" to high officials in the administration.

During the time of the man named Band ... Wrist Band, the group wormed its way into political influence through another "padrino."

Now, who is the "padrino" in this cute administration of Gloriaetta? He or she cannot be close to Gloriaetta, for sure.

Well, the rumor is that the patriarch of the "FC" group was a diehard supporter of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who exposed the "Jose Pidal" account.

And the "FC" group is lording it over the multibillion-peso business in security paper supply? Is it possible with the implacable likes of Gloriaetta?

* * *

FORMER bitter business rivals now seem to be good friends, and I am talking about Willian Tieng (Solar Television) and Lucio Co (Puregold outlets).

The two fought over the Duty Free Philippines contract for chocolate supply.

Now William Tieng is one of the main suppliers of Lucio Co for his S & R membership store at Fort Bonifacio, which of course sells a lot of imported items.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 28, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	11,400
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	58.5	58.5	58	58.5	843,100
Bank of the Phil. Islands	64.5	65	64.5	65	281,100
China Banking Corp.	860	860	860	860	200
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	1,150,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	101	102	101	102	133,410
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	60	61	60	60.5	604,000
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	1,300
Phil. Savings Bank	61	62	61	61	64,900
Security Bank Corp.	77.5	78.5	77.5	78	125,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	58.5	58.5	58.5	58.5	42,500
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citisecontine Com Inc.	7.1	7.1	6.9	7	376,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1645	1645	1640	1640	460
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	650	650	650	650	410
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2155	2170	2155	2170	2,330
Ivantage Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.54	1.54	440,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	6.1	6.1	5.9	5.9	5,226,000
First Gen Corp.	56.5	56.5	55.5	56	415,400
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70	71	70	70	340,000
Manila Electric Co. A	70	70	69.5	70	125,800
Manila Electric Co. B	70	70.5	70	70.5	313,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	489,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.6	2,276,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,180,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.1	2.2	2	2.1	50,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.44	1.46	1.42	1.42	648,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	15,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	55.5	55.5	54.5	54.5	23,000
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	25	25	25	25	1,900
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.5	2.5	2.48	2.48	10,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	70,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64	64	64	34,400
San Miguel Corp. B	72	72	71.5	72	50,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.24	2.26	208,000
Universal Robina Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	17	1,056,200
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	5,099,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.55	4.6	4.5	4.6	466,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	20,000
Holcim Philippines, Inc.	8.7	8.8	8.7	8.8	3,123,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	2,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5.1	5	5.1	1,224,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.34	0.35	2,540,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Asia Amalgamated Holdings	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	50,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	1,078,600,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	44,000,000
Ayala Corp.	545	545	535	545	1,676,440
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.89	0.9	0.89	0.9	1,880,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	3,193,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.7	418,000
AJO.Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.0725	6,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.45	3.55	3.45	3.55	310,000
APC Group Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.39	0.39	5,920,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	72,800,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.66	1.62	1.66	5,620,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	25,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	4	4	3.7	3.8	442,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	95,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.25	16,052,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	1,084,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	42,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	334,200
Medco Holdings	0.36	0.37	0.34	0.34	550,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.48	200,000
Magnum Holdings, Inc.	9	9.2	8.8	8.9	552,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.34	2.34	2.28	2.3	803,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.3	7,480,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	50,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	56,280,000
SM Investments Corp.	360	360	350	350	237,620
South China Resources Inc.	1.14	1.16	1.14	1.16	250,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	20,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	9,560,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	15.5	16.25	15.5	16.25	5,570,900
Belle Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.4	1.4	4,345,000
A Brown Co. Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.38	6,550,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.48	0.48	1,700,000
Cebu Holdings, Inc.	3.75	3.8	3.75	3.8	2,294,000
C & P Homes, Inc.	2.48	2.48	2.46	2.46	355,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.4	0.43	0.39	0.42	27,030,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	300,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.75	17,390,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	14,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.14	0.15	0.135	0.14	39,140,000
Filinvest Land, Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.66	3,802,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	200,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	290,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	29,500,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	1,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	250,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	1,390,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.026	0.026	0.024	0.024	3,500,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.25	3.45	3.25	3.4	82,908,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4	206,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.8	0.84	0.8	0.82	6,490,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.55	2.6	2.55	2.6	67,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	19.75	20	19.5	20	280,800
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.6	2,130,000
SM Development Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.7	338,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	10.5	11	10.5	11	4,139,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.66	0.66	200,000
Uniwide Holdings, Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.21	0.215	13,330,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	24.75	25	138,200
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	5,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	2,356,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1260	1260	1225	1225	37,170
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	907,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2575	2535	2500	2500	41,150
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	520,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.9	3.95	3.8	3.95	97,000
Imperial Res.	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.029	24,900,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	108,000
IPVG Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.5	6.7	583,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.065	0.065	0.0625	0.065	10,000,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	50,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.08	2.14	2.08	2.14	255,000
Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.046	0.045	0.046	59,200,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	20,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	25,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	27	27.5	27	27	1,474,800
Keppel Phils. Marine, Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	10,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.55	3.65	3.5	3.65	1,806,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	251,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.42	0.45	0.4	0.42	21,610,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.94	0.96	0.94	0.96	690,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8	8	8	8	40,000
Far Eastern University	810	810	810	810	160
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.8	466,000
Paxys Inc.	27	28	26.5	27.5	1,041,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	159,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.1	5.1	5	5.1	64,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	560,200,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	12.25	12.25	11.75	12	5,096,700
Benguet Corp. A	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	22,800
Benguet Corp. B	27	27	27	27	1,900
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.58	1.74	1.66	1.74	68,683,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	6,210,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	2,020,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	303,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.034	0.033	0.034	134,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	636,800,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.5	4.55	4.4	4.4	5,496,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	23.25	24.5	23.25	24.25	179,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.81	0.81	0.77	0.79	2,260,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1,225,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.47	0.49	9,290,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	68,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	31,400,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	139,400,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10.5	10	10	418,000

Import lib takes its toll on Chemphil

From page B1

(with foreign suppliers)," Verzosa said. "We are ready and willing to go through all the requirements to realize this, but the Department of Trade and Industry suddenly reversed itself on the safeguard matter."

Similar to dumping and countervailing measures, a safeguard duty is one of the trade protection measures available under the World Trade Organization.

Verzosa was referring to the Department of Trade and Industry's announcement earlier this month that it has dismissed CAWC's petition for a safeguard duty on STPP.

"We were caught offguard because we have been working on this for the past two years and Secretary [Peter B.] Favila had always given us positive response," she said.

The Chemphil official added that the DTI even encouraged the firm's efforts when it supported the imposition of a 200-day provisional safeguard starting July 6, 2006.

The provisional safeguard on any tradable product is imposed after the Tariff Commission conducts—following the requirements of the Safeguard Act—an investigation to find out whether a definitive safeguard action is needed.

In the CAWC petition, the commission eventually recommended a definitive safeguard, saying that increased imports caused serious injury to the domestic STPP industry.

More OFW funds . . .

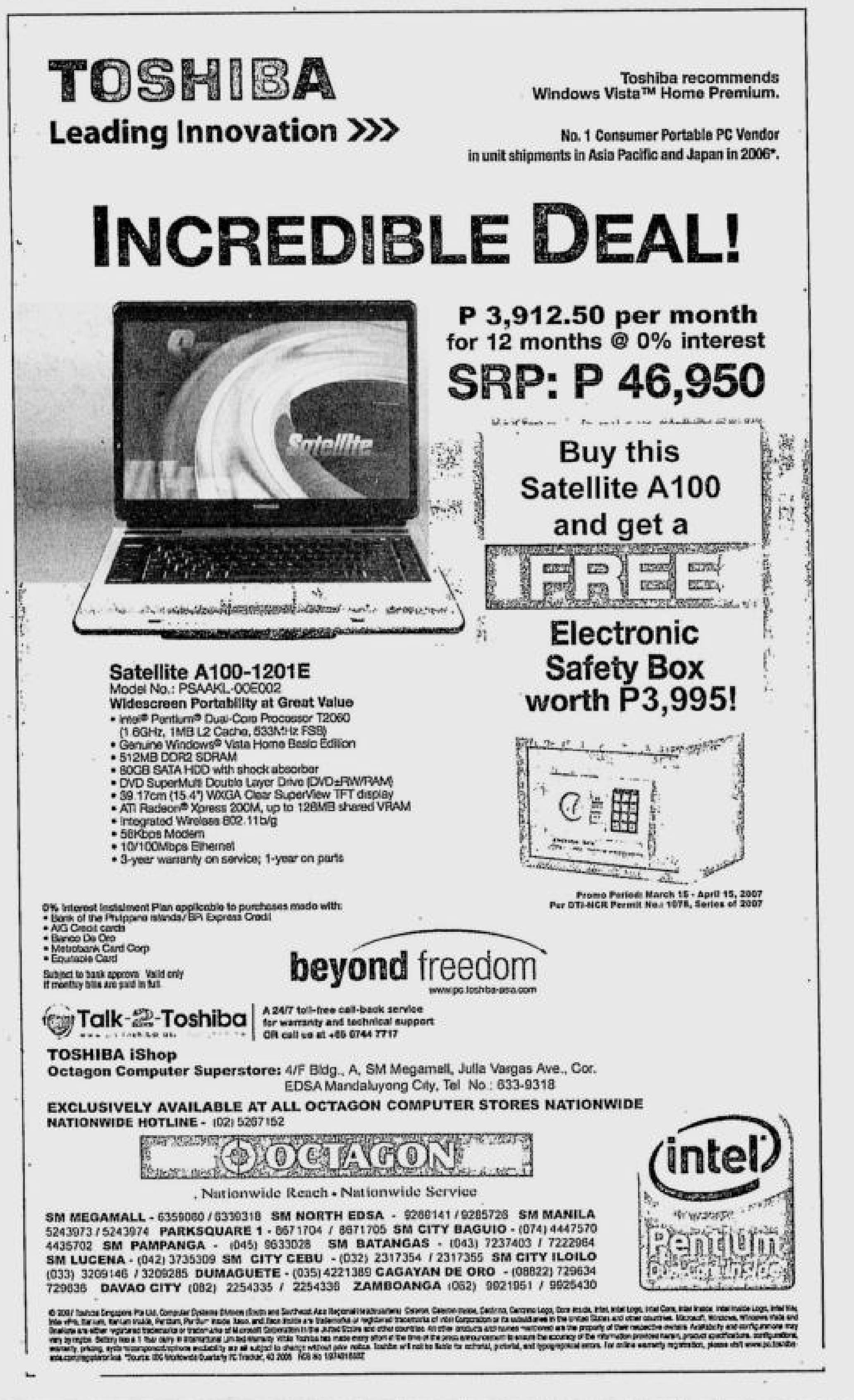
From page B1

that receive income from abroad as their main source are now middle and high-income families, it is much more likely now than in 1991 that the uses for this income go beyond consumption and subsistence, and are put toward saving and investment," the IMF said.

"This suggests that the lack of a relationship between investment and remittances could indeed be transitory, and that going forward, one may see a pick-up in investment in physical capital," it said.

Citing earlier international studies, the IMF said countries where economic returns to investment were low, or the private appropriability of those returns may be poor (due to high taxes or corruption, for example) may tend to see a rise in remittances go toward increased consumption, housing, and/or capital flight.

On the other hand, those studies also indicated that countries where the primary problem was due to poor financial intermediation, causing access to capital to be limited (even though there may be plenty of productive uses for it), and the cost of finance to be prohibitive, were likely to see increased investment from a rise in external inflows.



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Ayala Land to build 27 housing projects this year

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

LEADING PROPERTY DEVELOPER AYALA Land Inc. yesterday said it would spend P8.9 billion to build 27 residential projects this year, the highest number in its history, as remittances from overseas fuel a property boom.

Last year, nearly 9 million Filipinos working overseas sent home a record $12.8 billion, helping boost local spending power.

"We feel that the property cycle has turned amid the structural changes to the Philippine economy and global trends," Ayala's chief executive officer, Jaime Ayala, said at the company's annual shareholders' meeting.

Ayala said the residential projects—condominiums and houses aimed at all income groups—would be spread around different parts of the country, including untapped areas around Metro Manila.

ALI will venture out farther north to Bulacan and Pampanga and will also launch residential projects in Taguig City, Canlubang in Laguna, Cavite, Antipolo, Bacolod and Iloilo.

"We secured land in attractive geographic markets that we have identified for expansion," Ayala said.

Ayala Land, a unit of conglomerate Ayala Corp., has set a capital spending budget of P16.2 billion this year, up 17 percent from P13.8 billion in 2006.

A little more than half will be spent on the new residential projects and the balance will be used for shopping centers, corporate business and strategic landbank management, senior vice president and chief finance officer Jaime Ysmael said.

Investments in shopping centers will account for 24 percent or P3.9 billion of the company's budget for projects this year. Among the malls to be launched this year is the 195,000-sq. m. "Trinoma," which will be directly linked to the MRT station in North Edsa in Quezon City.

ALI is also venturing into the fast-growing retail market in Pampanga as it starts construction this year of a P2-billion mall in Angeles City. The Pampanga mall will sit on a 9.3-ha lot and will offer 70,000 sq. m. in gross leasable space.

Also adding to ALI's leasable space this year are the first phase of Greenbelt 5 in Makati to be opened toward the end of the year and the first phase of an expanded area in Ayala Center Cebu in November.

"The funding for this year's projects is locked in. We are sitting on total cash of P9.5 billion and we also have the proceeds from our preselling activities. We will have additional debt, but it is not that significant," Ysmael said.

The company had said its residential revenues climbed 47 percent in 2006.

Ayala Land, which recorded a net income of P3.9 billion last year, up 7 percent from 2005, has benefited from the aggressive expansion of business process outsourcing firms and real estate purchases by overseas Filipino workers. *With a report from Reuters*

Stocks . . .

From page B1

"The market is very dependent right now on external developments because of the dearth of positive leads here," said Ron Rodrigo of Unicapital Securities.

Wall Street shares slid overnight after a big drop in consumer confidence and plunging prices of homes raised concerns about the broader American economy, dealers said.

Lawrence de Leon of Accord Capital Equities said most investors stayed on the sidelines, only picking up select blue chips and smaller capitalized issues.

He said the market would likely continue consolidating ahead of the long Easter break next week.

Financial markets will be shut on April 5 and 6 for the annual Easter break, as well as on April 9, a local public holiday. *AFP*

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Professor Raymundo L. Roberto, the SM Professor of Retail Management, is a core faculty of the Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE) and teaches in the masteral degree programs in entrepreneurship (ME), development management (MDM), business administration (MBA) and management (MM) as well as certificate courses of AIM's different schools. He was the former Chief Financial Officer and represented the Institute on project teams for international cooperation and on technical boards of several development assistance agencies and technology promotion groups. He served on the board of some transnationals and investment companies, while owning and managing his enterprise. Prof. Roberto's areas of expertise, consulting work and research interests include financial management (i.e. corporate, enterprise, project and development), investment and non-bank financial institutions, enterprise development, innovation and financing, institutional development and capacity building, program and project development and management, and management of retail enterprises. Prof. Roberto undertook doctoral studies at the University of the Philippines, and holds a Master in Business Management (with Distinction) from the Asian Institute of Mangement.

Professor Richard L. Cruz, is a core faculty in the Master in Business Administration (MBA) Program of the W.SyCip Graduate School of Business (WSGSB). He teaches accounting and financial management courses in the MBA Program and in the Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (ACE). Prof. Cruz holds a Master in Business Management (With Distinction) from the Asian Institute of Management (1997). He completed his Bachelor of Science in Management Engineering at the Ateneo de Manila University (1992). He was also a scholar at the Philippines Science High School. Prof. Cruz areas of interests include corporate investment and entrepreneurial finance.

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ICTSI to gain P6.6B from sale of shares

Company to use the money to acquire more contracts abroad

By Riza T. Olchondra

INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER TERMINAL Services Inc. stands to net P6.625 billion from the sale of 261 million of its shares held by its subsidiary, ICTSI Warehousing Inc. (IWI).

The parent company told the Philippine Stock Exchange late Tuesday that IWI had already received the proceeds from the the sale of these shares, which were priced at P26.25 each. The sale was underwritten by UBS AG and certain CLSA entities.

"At this share price (P26.25), the gross selling price of the offered shares is P6.851 billion, plus another P1.023 billion if the underwriters exercise their overallotment option over the 39 million option shares," ICTSI said in another disclosure.

The net proceeds from the sale will go to the parent company, ICTSI, which intends to use the fund for the acquisition of more overseas contracts.

Early this month, ICTSI chair and president Enrique Razon Jr. said the company wanted to venture into Latin America and India to continue its aggressive international expansion.

"ICTSI has been informed by the Guayaquil Port authority, Autoridad Portuario de Guayaquil, that ICTSI had been declared winner of the 20-year public service concession for the container and multipurpose terminal at the Port of Guayaquil," ICTSI said in a disclosure on Monday.

ICTSI said it would sign a 20-year concession agreement for the port, which handles containerized, general, and bulk cargoes, in May 2007. The port of Guayaquil is in Ecuador, on the west coast of South America. The Philippine-based international port operator has its flagship in Manila's south harbor. It also operates in Japan, Indonesia, Poland, Brazil, Syria, Madagascar and China. Foreign operations accounted for 60 percent of the port operator's P1.8-billion net income for 2006, which was 34 percent higher than the P1.34 bilion in profit in 2005.

BPI to sell P3.75B worth of bad loans

By Doris C. Dumlao

BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISlands will sell P3.75 billion worth of bad loans to foreign lender Bank of America N.A.

The move is in line with the bank's efforts to reduce its stock of nonperforming assets.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, BPI said Bank of America had emerged as the highest bidder in the March 23 auction for the bank's assets.

This sale is the fourth tranche of BPI's bulk asset disposal. Bank senior vice president Senen Matoto said it would be up to the winning bidder whether it would use the Special Purpose Vehicle framework for this transaction.

In an interview, Matoto said BPI and BA would commence negotiations for the finalization of the sale.

Matoto estimated that the sale would reduce the bank's NPL-to-total loans ratio by 50 basis points.

Based on the BPI's last reported NPL ratio of about 6 percent, the deal with BA will bring down the ratio to about 5.5 percent.

If BA would want to use the SPV framework for the deal, Matoto said consummation could take a bit longer as the assets would still have to go through the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' registration and approval process.

BDO, EPCIBank post double-digit profit growth

BANCO DE ORO UNIVERSAL BANK AND EQuitable PCIBank both reported double-digit profit growth for 2006, fueling optimism that their merger would yield even better results.

"Both banks have very strong track records. We are quite confident that, upon integration, we will be able to draw on our combined strengths and thus serve our banking public even better," BDO president and EPCIBank officer in charge Nestor V. Tan said.

BDO, which will be the surviving entity, reported an audited net income of P3.1 billion for 2006, up 23 percent from P2.5 billion in 2005.

EPCIB, for its part, reported a 2006 net income of P3.27 billion, 21 percent higher than year-ago's P2.7 billion.

A substantial increase in BDO's investment and loan portfolio levels pushed net interest income up by 22 percent to P8.3 billion. On the other hand, non-interest income grew by 31 percent, reaching P5.2 billion for the year.

In the meantime, EPCIBank reported that its net interest income hit P11 billion despite tightening margins.

The bank said it had rebalanced its earning assets portfolio by reducing aggregate investment in securities by 18 percent to P62.3 billion.

Doris C. Dumlao

CURRENCIES

March 28, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.749120	1.000000	48.0770
Japan	Yen	0.006356	0.008485	0.4079
United Kingdom	Pound	1.472769	1.966000	94.5194
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095876	0.127985	6.1531
Switzerland	Franc	0.617271	0.823995	39.6152
Canada	Dollar	0.647244	0.864006	41.5388
Singapore	Dollar	0.494305	0.659848	31.7235
Australia	Dollar	0.605986	0.808931	38.8910
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.987108	2.652590	127.5286
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199781	0.266688	12.8216
Brunei	Dollar	0.492680	0.657678	31.6192
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023558	0.031447	1.5119
UAE	Dirham	0.204025	0.272353	13.0939
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.334900	64.1780
Korea	Won	0.000796	0.001063	0.0511
China	Yuan**	0.096868	0.129309	6.2168
Argentina	Peso	0.241262	0.322061	15.4837
Brazil	Real	0.362946	0.484496	23.2931
Denmark	Kroner	0.134260	0.179224	8.6166
India	Rupee	0.017397	0.023223	1.1165
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217136	0.289855	13.9354
Mexico	New Peso	0.067791	0.090494	4.3507
New Zealand	Dollar	0.538006	0.718184	34.5281
South Africa	Rand	0.103277	0.137864	6.6281
Sweden	Kroner	0.107425	0.143402	6.8943
Syria	Pound	0.014431	0.019264	0.9262
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022650	0.030235	1.4536

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 27, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of March 27, 2007

Coke chief vows to regain lost market share

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE CHAIR OF THE COCA-COLA CO., THE world's biggest beverage firm, vowed yesterday to arrest the steady slide in the the firm's soft drinks sales—both locally and globally—and regain market share that had been lost in recent years to alternative beverages.

At the same time, Neville Isdell justified the company's decision to buy food giant San Miguel Corp. out of Coca-Cola Bottlers Philippines Inc. (CCBPI), saying both parties were dissatisfied with the declining sales of its flagship cola product.

"San Miguel wasn't happy with the performance, and we weren't happy with the performance," he told reporters during a briefing in Makati City.

The Coca-Cola Co. bought out San Miguel from CCBPI for $590 million last month, giving the Atlanta-based firm full ownership and management over the bottler.

"They had other markets and ambitions and they decided that their capital was better applied somewhere else," Isdell said of his firm's former partner.

The Coke chair and CEO pointed out that CCBPI used to be the model of best practices in the soft drinks industry in the 1980s when foreign Coke executives would visit the country to observe CCBPI's operations.

Today, Isdell said that he planned to bring talent from abroad to help CCBPI out of its slump.

"I think both Coke and San Miguel ran [CCBPI] as an island," he explained, when asked about the decline in local sales. "That's both our fault."

"We only focused on the past," Isdell added. "We need to bring in new ideas."

One area which the Coke chief wants the local unit to refocus on—in line with global practices—is its marketing effort.

Henceforth, he said that Coke's local unit would give more emphasis to innovative marketing schemes on top of traditional efforts like increasing the product's visibility by providing more signages and refrigerator units to *sari-sari* stores.

This is in line with the firm's global push, which saw it raise its marketing budget by an additional $400 million last year.

This has brought immediate results, with Coke's worldwide sales in the fourth quarter of 2006 rising at its fastest pace since 1998, he said.

"Our growth is not over," he said, amid the worldwide shift to health drinks. "At the end of the day, people still like carbonated drinks."

To jumpstart growth in its local unit, Isdell said that a new management team has been put in place, including a new president, a chief operating officer, and several other senior officers.

Isdell predicted that Coke would eventually reduce its stake in CCBPI to a minority position in the future as part of its strategy of maintaining franchise operations worldwide.

He added that the parent firm's decision to take over CCBPI correlates with its recent performance. "It's something we do every now and then," he said.

Samsung shows the future of digital color

Comprehensive suite of innovative IT products lets consumers experience a new world of high definition color

PHILIPPINES, MARCH 06 2007 - Samsung Electronics today showcased its latest range of premium IT products in the printer, LCD monitor, and personal computer enhancement categories, reinforcing the company's pioneering leadership position in developing cutting edge technologies and solutions to meet the increasing demands of discerning consumers for high grade visual quality and clarity.

Samsung this year aims to achieve $50M for its entire line up of IT products. "Leveraging on its expertise in digital convergence, innovation, and technology, Samsung is setting its goal in being the major IT player in the Philippines. With our new IT products, we show the consumer the bigger picture of a more colorful digital life," said Spencer Shim, President and CEO, Samsung Electronics Philippines.

Acknowledging that corporate end users these days value design and seek products that offer outstanding performance, the Samsung IT strategy is catered towards meeting the sophisticated needs of its users.

Samsung today put the spotlight on the world's smallest color laser printer, the Samsung CLP-300. "The introduction of this compact laser printer today marks another milestone for Samsung as it further revolutionizes the color laser printer as a desktop companion for individual use," said Bongwan Kim, Samsung Vice President for IT. The new color printer that weighs just 13.6kg and covers the area as small as an open magazine, boasts a fast and quiet printer speed of up to four pages a minute for color and sixteen pages per minute for black and white printing. Equipped with Samsung's patented Non-Orbiting Noiseless Imaging System (NO-NOIS) technology, the Samsung CLP-300 operates at a lower noise level than any standard multi-pass printer.

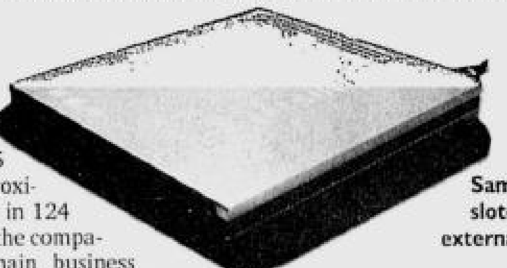
Samsung's CLP-300, the worlds smallest Color Laser Printer

Made even more convenient is its innovative bottle shaped toner, which provide hassle-free toner changes.

Also showcased was the Samsung Large Format display monitor which is able to achieve a flawless balance that does not sacrifice brightness or contrast for that perfect picture. Through its unique DNIe technology, noise is eliminated, natural hues are shown, light and shade is boosted, and edges of images are sharpened. Supporting versatile connectivity, Samsung's Large Format display is built for professional convenience. PC and video can be easily connected with loop out function support. In addition, 10 units can be connected as one unit and displayed from a single PC without additional devices. For video wall convenience, the Large Format display monitor also supports VESA wall mounting standards, offering various installation solutions including wall, vertical, and ceiling mount.

Solutions showcased in the Samsung IT roadshow also included the world's 1st slot-in external DVD drive that supports 8cm discs, and the Samsung SyncMaster 226Bw, a 22-inch Windows Vista Premium Certificate Wide Format Monitor.

The "Windows Vista Premium Certification" was recently obtained by Samsung from Microsoft for its 19, 20 and 22-inch wide monitors. Samsung was given the certification after passing through the demanding high defintion regulations that would accommodate Windows Vista User Interface and through stricter standards than basic certification in port availability.



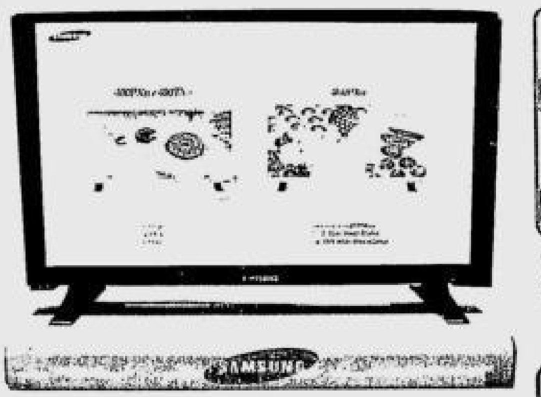
Samsung's slot-in slim external DVD writer

About Samsung Electronics

Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. is a global leader in semiconductor, telecommunication, digital media and digital convergence technologies with 2006 parent company sales of US$63.4 billion and net income of US$8.5 billion. Employing approximately 138,000 people in 124 offices in 56 countries, the company consists of five main business units: Digital Media Business, LCD Business, Semiconductor Business, Telecommunication Network Business and Digital Appliance Business. Recognized as one of the fastest growing global brands, Samsung Electronics is a leading producer of digital TVs, memory chips, mobile phones and TFT-LCDs.

For further information, please visit www.samsung.com

Bong Wan Kim-Samsung Phils. Vice President for Information Technology



Wilson Tan and Virgin Tan of Thinking Tools

Bong Wan Kim (Samsung VP for ICT), Allan Sio (Lamco Sales & Marketing), Martin Chua (Meriton Sale

Mr. Spencer Shim, Samsung CEO & President delivers his welcome speech

Mrs. Rosa Yu, Executive Vice-Pres. of Lamco and Mrs. Betty Ng – Vice-Pres for Sales & marketing o

Stewart Lim (Samsung Prod. Mngr for ODDHDD), Frederick King (Sykes Call Center IT director)

LCD Monitor

Aileen Chua from Samsung, Princess Chua (MSI-ECS), and Robert Tiu

BPO sector seen employing up to 800,000 by 2010

ADB projection lower than gov't, industry forecast

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S BUSINESS process outsourcing sector can create jobs for 7-11 percent of the new labor force entrants between this year and 2010, a high contribution for a single economic activity, an Asian Development Bank study said.

A March 2007 working paper prepared by the ADB's economics and research department projected that the total number of BPO employees could hit 600,000 to 800,000 by 2010, equivalent to 7 percent to 11 percent of the expected new labor entrants during the period.

As of end 2005, the BPO sector employed 163,250 people.

The paper, "An Analysis of the Philippine BPO Industry," was authored by ADB economists Nedelyn Magtibay-Ramos, Gemma Estrada and Jesus Felipe. It was released at the sidelines of the ADB's press briefing on its flagship publication Asian Development Outlook 2007.

ADB's projection, however, was lower than the joint forecast of the government and the BPO industry at one million workers by 2010.

In 2005, the BPO industry generated total revenue of $2.4 billion, accounting for 2.4 percent of the gross domestic product.

The contact or call center subsector accounted for the bulk, posting earnings of $1.8 billion and employing 112,000 individuals or almost 70 percent of the BPO workers.

"Given improvements in human capital and the right policy environment, the Philippine BPO sector may indeed become an important employment-generating sector in the future," the study said.

To date, the ADB said the BPO sector has had very little interaction with the rest of the domestic economy, which meant that an increase in its output may not necessarily increase production in other sectors.

"Notwithstanding its low intersectoral linkages, the BPO sector has the potential of generating a significant increase in the total wage bill for the economy," the study said.

The biggest challenge is whether the Philippines can continue attracting fresh investments in BPO, given tougher competition from other locations, the ADB said.

"Although the advantages of locating in the Philippines should be emphasized, constraints like low hiring rates, high attrition rates, high cost of electricity and weak governance must be addressed without delay," the study said.

The ADB said another challenge was how to move up the knowledge intensity ladder. It noted that while this is desired by the government and the industry, there is no specific strategy so far laid out to achieve this goal.

The third challenge is whether the sector would continue to require government support.

"If the government is seriously bent on moving toward knowledge process outsourcing (KPO), it is then important to identify strategies to entice more investors that are involved in KPO, as well as to encourage BPO firms to move into higher value-added activities," the study said.

Since the existence of a pool of educated workers with tertiary education is seen as a key to the development of the sector, the ADB study said the following two questions must be answered:

- Is it the right policy for a country like the Philippines to continue investing in tertiary education to satisfy the needs of the BPO sector?
- Are students who take degrees in disciplines such as engineering, statistics, economics, etc. to be blamed for their lack of appropriate skills to be employed in the BPO sector?

GOINGS-ON

Cebu ICT 2007 slated

THIS YEAR'S CEBU ICT INTERNATIONAL CONference and Exhibition will be held on June 26 to 28, the Cebu ICT 2007 organizing committee said.

The conference and exhibit, which will be held with the support of telecom solutions provider Innove Communications, will be conducted in two venues: the Cebu International Convention Center and Shangri-La's Mactan Island Resort and Spa.

The meet aims to bring together decision-makers and pioneers from the Asian IT industry to discuss their vision for transforming the region into the IT investment destination and outsourcing center of the global ICT industry.

San Miguel juice and tea line

San Miguel Beverages Inc. has entered into the noncarbonated beverage industry with the introduction of its newest line of healthy ready-to-drink teas and juices under the Magnolia brand.

SMBI's entry into this business comes at a time when the market is in search of nutritious but more affordable beverages—from less calories and sugar to more vitamins and other nutrients.

Magnolia juice and tea line is packed with vitamins C, B1, B2, B6 and B9.

Initially, SMBI will roll out four flavors—pineapple, lemon, orange and apple—of its juices and tea, called Magnolia Fruit Drink and Magnolia Health Tea, in 250 ml. bottles. The products will soon be available at leading stores nationwide and will be priced at P5 per bottle.

Tampakan prexy quits amid looming shakeup

By Daxim L. Lucas

A MANAGEMENT SHAKE-UP IS in the offing at the firm responsible for the Tampakan copper-gold mining project in South Cotabato after the share swap between Alsons Corp. and Australia's Xstrata mining giant.

At stake is the direction of mining operations at the Sagittarius Mines Inc. (SMI), which oversees one of the largest undeveloped copper deposits in the world.

Yesterday, Paul G. Dominguez resigned as president of SMI to "enable Xtrata Copper...to install its new management team."

The statement, released by the Dominguez camp, did not give more details about his abrupt depairture, although sources familiar with the situation revealed that the Australian miner, through its Indophil Resources NL unit, had planned to appoint a new Australian management team.

The move, if confirmed, marks a step in the opposite direction from the move of Australian miner Lafayette, which had fired its Australian managers who were at the helm during the Rapu-Rapu island mining disaster. Incidentally, Lafayette appointed Carlos G. Dominguez—Paul's brother—as head of its Rapu-Rapu operations to clean up after the Australias were replaced with an all-Filipino team.

Paul Dominguez's resignation takes effect tomorrow, March 30, 2007. He will, however, remain a company director.

The company has yet to reveal his replacement.

Recently, Alsons Corp., the private holding company of the Alcantara Group, has entered into a share swap agreement with its Australian partner Indophil Resources NL, effectively increasing its stake in the Tampakan project. Under the scheme, Alsons will exchange its existing 5-percent stake in the Tampakan projec—which it is developing with Indophil—for A$4.3 million and 37 million new shares in the Australian firm.

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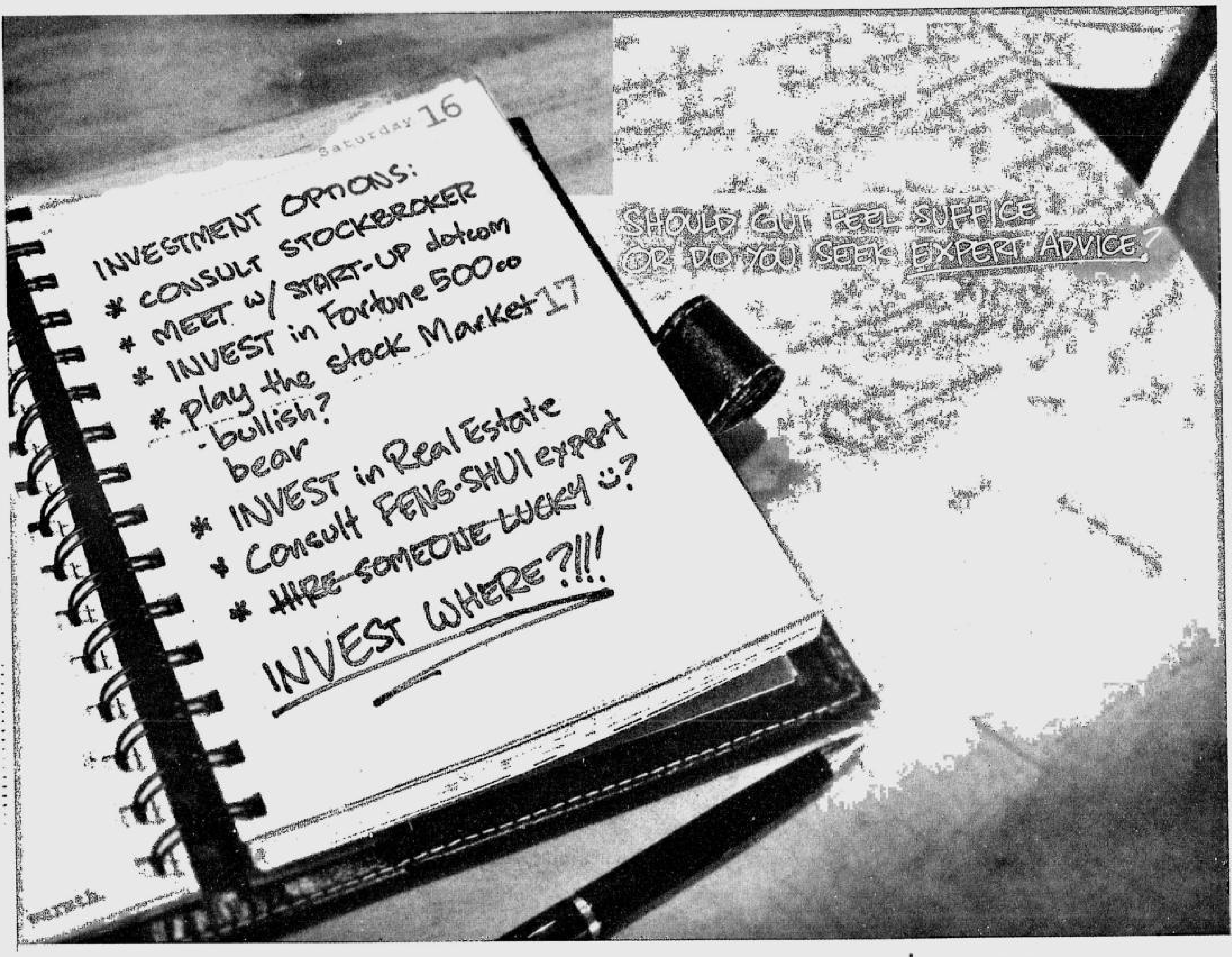
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Philippine schools competes for IT wizard supremacy

STUDENTS FROM ALL OVER THE Philippines battled it out for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) supremacy in the first CAL National Interschool Battle of the ICT Wizards. Eliminations were held in key cities all over the islands, where all were rounded up to the finals last Feb. 17, at the Philippine Trade and Training Center. The competition was open to all public and private elementary students who will compete in the six categories of Web Designing, Desktop Publishing, PC Assembly, Applications Programming, and ICT Quiz bees for Elementary and High School.

Computer Assisted Learning (CAL), the world's leading education provider, unleashed the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) competition of the year in an aim to highlight the student's ICT knowledge covering general ICT concepts to the more advanced special Applications categories. The regional eliminations showed much promise for the future of ICT in our country. Dr. Nilo L. Rosas, chair of the Academics Board of CAL proudly beams, "The young talents that have shown up during the regionals are very promising. The future of ICT in the country is very bright."

This prestigious gathering of young learners has captivated schools in the regions, as barangay schools actively competed in the eliminations. Jasper Talisoc of Our Lady of Fatima Academy in Davao, a participant in the regional competition said, "Competitions like these are really good. Quiz bees like these are really helpful to the students because they learn a lot and are able to explore."

The Department of Education has actively taken part in the promotion of the competition as they see this as a way to promote ICT in schools in the country, especially for the public education system. "It's a good experience for the students," quotes Edgar Garcia, ICT Coordinator of the Department of Education Division of Bataan. "The skills of the students are developed because even though subjects like Programming and Web Design are not taught in public schools yet, the trainers are challenged to learn about these things to teach their students. Both the teacher and the student learns."

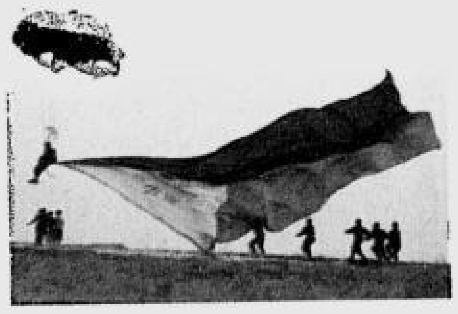
Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) Corporation has always been an advocate of ICT learning, being an international education provider and one of the world's leading ICT institute for children, teens, and adults. Established in Singapore in 1986, it is now headquartered in the Philippines, with a network of schools in 12 countries offering ICT courses and curriculum for pre-school up to tertiary levels. CAL has engineered an integration program that is in tune with the new technological advancements of the industry. CAL ICT Education programs are being implemented in 156 private schools and 45 public central schools in the Philippines covering 85,000 students.

CAL aims to continue the battle every year. "We'll definitely join next year!" beams Edgar Garcia of the DepEd Division of Bataan. "This kind of competition exposes the children to ICT literacy as well as ICT competitiveness."

OLAY HELPS INQUIRER STAFF FIGHT SKIN AGING

Olay Total Effects just gave the staff of Inquirer plenty of reasons to love the skin they're in. In a recent visit to Inquirer, P&G's flagship beauty brand Olay gave the publication's staff the chance to fight the seven signs of skin aging by swapping their old moisturizer brand for a bottle of Olay Total Effects. During the whole day visit, ladies - and even gentlemen - also got free skin analysis from Olay's Beauty Imaging System (BIS) machine which determines the condition of the pores, wrinkles, spots and texture. A beauty consultant was also on hand to explain the BIS result and give skin care tips. Olay Total Effects has a new technology in its VitaNiacin complex, a unique vitamin combination of Panthenol (Pro-Vitamin B5), Niacinamide (Vitamin B3) and Vitamin E. These are ingredients that have been proven to fight the seven signs of skin aging - fine lines and wrinkles, rough skin texture, unbalanced skin tone, surface dullness, increased appearance of pores, blotches and age spots, and dry skin. P&G Philippines assistant country PR manager Anna Legarda was around during the activity to personally present Olay Total Effects to Inquirer publisher Isagani Yambot, president Alexandra 'Sandy' Prieto-Romualdez and editor-in-chief Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc. Shown are the Inquirer staff holding their Olay Total Effects.

FUJIFILM-YKL HOT AIR BALLOON PHOTO CONTEST



Brigido Ding Alcayde's entry (shown in photo) showcasing the Philippine Flag waving proudly was the top choice at the Fujifilm-YKL Hot Air Balloon Photo Contest held at the 11th Hot Air Balloon Fiesta in Clark Field in Pampanga. The photo event, aligned with the government's move to promote tourism in Northern Philippines, proved to be Fujifilm-YKL's best testament to the beauty of the region, seen through beautiful images captured in film. Other winning entries include Mon Castillo and Sonny Decena, 2nd and 3rd place respectively. Winners will receive special prizes including trip for two to Boracay, a digital camera and other consolation prizes.

AGATEP SCOOPS THREE GOLD QUILL AWARDS

Agatep Associates (AAI) received three citations for outstanding communications programs during the celebrated Gold Quill Awards Philippines 2007 established by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). Agatep won Gold Quills for AAI's 'Maintaining a Good Reputation', Euro RSCG Manila's 'From Obscurity to Centerstage', and National Geographic Channel's 'Strictly Asian Ballroom'. Photo shows the AAI team including (from left) Kane O. Choa, senior division manager; Claire de Leon Papa, division manager; Audrey A. General, general manager; Charlie Agatep, president and CEO; Amy Ang, PR consultant; Frances Crisol, media relations manager; Pinky Demaisip, associate division manager and Julius Punzalan, art director.

OCLP, NUCOMM CONTRACT SIGNING

Ortigas & Company Limited Partnership (OCLP) recently signed a contract to construct a 5-storey Build-to-Suit facility at Frontera Verde, Pasig City, with a Canadian-based BPO, NuComm International Inc. NuComm Centre will be operational by January 2008. Shown are (from left): lawyer Mike Abundo - OCLP legal manager, Jun Abo – NuComm country site director, Joselito F. Santos – OCLP deputy COO, Rex C. Drilon II – OCLP COO, Real Bergevin – NuComm president, Bob Gust – NuComm senior consultant, Catherine C. Ko – OCLP real estate division head and Emmanuel A. Rapadas – OCLP CFO.

Seaoil powers 'Go! Biofuels Caravan'

INDEPENDENT PETROLEUM COMPANY Seaoil Philippines was at the forefront of the first "Go! Biofuels Caravan" that recently traversed the entire Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao stretch to promote the use of renewable fuels among Filipino motorists.

Seaoil provided ethanol-blended fuel to all vehicles in the caravan and shared its expertise on biofuels to various audiences in public forums held in key cities of the country.

Seaoil president Glenn Yu said his company is proud to be a part of the 11-day event that also drew support from the Department of Energy, the Sustainable Energy Development Program, and the Council of Philippine Clean Cities.

"This caravan aims to showcase vehicles running on ethanol and biodiesel and educate the public on the benefits of biofuels. Seaoil is proud to fuel this undertaking. Our aim as a company is to fuel the change to renewable fuels," he told a public forum in Cagayan de Oro City.

Organized by the Philippine Fuel Ethanol Alliance, the caravan took off at the Seaoil station on Edsa on Feb. 4 and went to Pagudpud in Ilocos Norte. It then drove to Tarlac City for a forum at the Hacienda Luisita, then to Southern Luzon for a forum at the Ford Philippines plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. From there it went to Lipa City, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Cagayan de Oro City.and in Malaybalay, Bukidnon before wrapping up in Davao City on Feb. 13.

The public forums attracted students and teachers as well as jeepney and bus drivers and operators, gas station owners and other concerned citizens.

GASSING up on biofuel: Seaoil president Glenn Yu (left) is all smiles as Seaoil franchisee Abdulrashid Manggay Guro pumps E10 into one of the vehicles that participated in the Biofuels Caravan. Others in photo are Efren Cortez, secretary of the House Committee on Energy; Guro's wife; and Neil Rasal, representative of Ford Philippines.

Seaoil is the first oil company to be considered a Biofuels Major in the Philippines, being the first to specialize in production and sale of ethanol-blended gasoline. As early as August 2005, Seaoil has been selling E10 or gasoline with 10 percent ethanol blend and since then more than 4 million Seaoil customers have experienced better engine performance and lower greenhouse gas emissions because of the cleaner fuel.

Biofuels such as ethanol and biodiesel come from agricultural crops like sugarcane and coconut. Last January, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo signed the Philippine Biofuels Law that mandates the blending of ethanol and biodiesel into imported gasoline and diesel being sold in gas stations.

Yu noted that in the coming years, the Biofuels Law would further reduce the country's dependence on imported oil as local biofuels production gets going. "This would be a boost to the economy, providing an additional P28 billion a year for the agriculture sector," he said.

Pinoys prefer top-load washing machines

FILIPINO HOUSEHOLDS PREFER TOP-LOAD washing machines because of their design, efficiency, and other practical features, according to Whirlpool Philippines, distributor of some of the most widely used home appliances.

"Basically, there are two types of washing machine equipment - top-load washing machines that have an opening on top of the appliance, and front-load washers that have a door in front," said Whirlpool Philippines marketing manager Joy Catiis. "In the Philippines, consumers prefer top-load washing machines, not only because it is more efficient, but for many other practical reasons as well."

The most obvious advantage of top-load washing machines, according to engineers of Whirlpool Philippines, is that they can be filled with water both automatically and manually, which is especially important in the local setting where water shortage or low water pressures are common. They are also ideal for households in areas that have no running water. Top-load washing machines enable users to interrupt washing cycles anytime without wasting water and detergent that are already in the appliance. This is especially useful when putting additional items in the washing machine in the middle of a washing cycle. This makes top load models more practical and even more convenient than front load washing machines because of the nature of their design. With front load models, water is extremely difficult to load manually and it will not allow you to put in additional clothes once you start washing because opening the door will mean spilling and wasting the water and detergent already inside which also means losing precious time and energy.

It has also been observed that top load washers are highly efficient in washing clothes because these appliances combine mechanical, chemical (detergent), and thermal systems to enhance cleaning capabilities as compared to front load models which, due to limitations in design, combine mainly chemical and thermal systems. The mechanical system found only in Whirlpool top load washers is the Xtra Roll Action Agitator which is a device that drives items to the bottom of the wash tub for thorough cleaning.

Last and most importantly, there is the price factor. The price of a 5 to 6kg front load washer would range from somewhere around P25,000 to P35,000. While for that same amount, you can already get a 10.5kg heavy duty top load washer. Top load washers are truly a wise investment for the average Filipino.

Whirlpool is the world leader when it comes to washing machines. Their top-load washing machines are available in a wide variety of models, price ranges, and styles. They also offer different features including cycle and temperature selections, spin speeds, and fabric care capabilities. Whirlpool also offers other products that are known worldwide for their high quality, state-of-the-art technology, performance, durability, design, and ease of use.

For more information on Whirlpool washing machines and their other products, interested customers may contact Exatech Inc at (632) 712-0535.

Bits Clips

GCF Lenten musicale

ON MARCH 31 AT 3 AND 8 p.m. and on April 1 at 8 p.m., Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF) located at Ruby corner Garnett Streets, Ortigas Center presents the musicale "My Utmost for His Highest", a spirit-filled Easter Cantata Presentation based on the Christian classic written by Oswald Chambers that proclaims the true meaning of surrender unto the Lord and his great work of salvation. This musicale will feature the GCF Chancel Choir to be conducted by multi-faceted, world-renowned conductor Jai Sabas-Aracama with professor Sam Yucoco of Ateneo High School Arts Department alternating as conductor, former news anchor and FEBC president Dan Andrew Cura and top radio DJ Dylan Thomas Halili leading the soulful narration. Those interested may contact Louella Chua at 632-1354 or send e-mail to myutmost @yahoogroups.com.

Revisiting Filipino churches

THE SECOND OF A SERIES OF PHOTO EXHIBITS BY four artists. This time, they invite you to rediscover the beauty of our churches. It opens on Palm Sunday, April 1 at 3 p.m. and will run until April 30 at the Java Jazz Coffee Shop, Sungay West, Tagaytay City. Exhibiting artists are Edray Raymundo, Farlet Vale, Resty Garcia and Eddie Abesamis. Proceeds will be donated to the Hapag-asa Fund of the Ina ng Laging Saklolo Parish, Tagaytay. Hapag-asa is a Caritas project that aims to bring millions of malnourished Filipino kids back to health through a nationwide feeding program.

JRU alumna returns for seminar

WORLD-RENOWNED JRU ALUMNA JULIETA "Jhet" Torcelino-Van Ruyven recently paid the JRU community a visit and conducted a seminar entitled "How to Program Your Mind for Success" at the JRU Auditorium in Mandaluyong. She graduated from JRU in 1984. Jhet is an accomplished author and resource speaker of inspirational and motivational talks, with stints in various parts of the globe. In recognition of JRU's valuable contribution to her success, Jhet decided to conduct a free seminar for the students and faculty of JRU, along with her colleague and mentor, motivation speaker Nate Bunger. JRU, the university that cares about good education, is in a continuous quest to provide quality education and produce well-rounded graduates. For more info, log on to www.jru.edu.

TAN RECEIVES DOCTORATE DEGREE FROM CPU ILOILO

Top officials of Central Philippine University (CPU) in Iloilo City don the academic hood upon business tycoon Lucio C. Tan (fourth from left) upon his conferment of an honorary doctorate degree in business and industrial management engineering. Tan, 72, an airline and tobacco magnate, was recognized for his business achievements, contributions to various social causes and for serving as an inspiration to aspiring Filipino entrepreneurs. Photo shows Tan with (from left) CPU president Juanito Acanto, CPU registrar Ruth Fernandez, Tan's wife Carmen, and Dr. Alfonso Uy, chair of the CPU board of trustees.

JOLLIBEE'S TOY, BOOK DRIVE GETS ANVIL AWARD

For instilling the value of giving among Filipinos for the 11th straight year, Jollibee marketing specialist Tish Quimpo (leftmost), brand manager Twinkle Aniceto (3rd from left), and Stratworks Marketing Communications managing director Donna Nievera-Conda (right) receive an Anvil Award of Merit for advocacy programs from the Public Relations Society of the Philippines. The program was able to donate more than one million toys and books during its 11-year-run. Giving the award is 42nd Anvil Awards juror and Meridian founder Myla Villanueva.

SUN CELLULAR MEETS PARTNERS FROM BRUNEI

Sun Cellular recently met with its roaming partner from Brunei, DSTCom, headed by their international roaming manager Dayang Tengah H. Metussin. The meeting was part of DSTCom's planned visit to various roaming partners to study and learn more about the different markets worldwide. Sun Cellular AVP for international services Joel Lumanlan, together with vice president for customer relationship management Reuben Pangan and senior IR manager Richard De Castro welcomed the delegates from Brunei and briefed them on the current state of the Philippine telco industry. They also presented the visitors with an overview of Sun Cellular's services, including a tour at the Sun Shop in Robinsons Galleria. Photo shows Sun Cellular AVP for International Services Joel Lumanlan discussing some of Sun's services to the representatives of DST Brunei at the Sun Shop in Robinson's Galleria.

PEPITO MALABANAN CASTRO

19 March 1939 – 26 March 2007

An esteemed lawyer, Certified Public Accountant and public servant, the beloved father of **Aldose Jose**, husband of **Orlinda** (†), son of **Claro Castro** (†) and **Guillerma Malabanan** (†), and brother of **Mena** (†), **David**, **Gertrudo** (†), **Rafael**, **Julito** (†), and **Wally**, passed away in the Grace of our Lord at the age of 68.

His son, brothers, sisters-in-law, brother-in-law, nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Dama De Noche Chapel, La Funeraria Paz, Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque.

Interment at the Manila Memorial Park follows the 9:00 a.m. Necrological Mass at La Funeraria Paz on Saturday, March 31st, 2007.

Our Dearly Beloved

"Nanang"

Lucia Reyes Vda. De Singson

July 6, 1906 – March 8, 2007

Peacefully joined our Lord on March 8, 2007
at 7:25 p.m. at St. Rose Siena Hospital
Henderson, Nevada, U.S.A.

Her loving children **Mariano, Jr.**, **Concepcion**, **Manuel** & **Thelma** and **Ma. Isabel** and her grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to join them in prayers for her eternal happiness in heaven.

Memorial services were held at the Palm Mortuary in Henderson, Nevada on March 17, 2007 from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Her remains will arrive in Manila on Saturday, March 31, 2007 and will lie in state at the Sanctuario de San Antonio Chapel in Forbes Park, Makati City from March 31 to April 2, 2007.

Interment will take place at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City at 4:00 p.m. on April 3, 2007.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; He set my feet on the rock and gave me a firm place to stand."

Psalm 40:1-2

His Excellency, Most Rev. Luis Antonio G. Tagle
Bishop of Imus

The Clergy, Religious, and Lay Faithful
of the Diocese of Imus, Cavite

together with the Ignacio Family

announce with joy and hope the triumphant crossing over from us to the everlasting love of the Father of our beloved

Rev. Fr. Rosendo Lazaro Ignacio

on 27th of March 2007 at the age of 72, after more than 45 fruitful years of service in the Lord's Vineyard.

His mortal remains lie in state at the St. Michael Parish Church, Poblacion, Bacoor, Cavite, till 30 March 2007 at 8:00 a.m.

The Concelebrated Mass of the Resurrection will be offered at 1:00 p.m., Friday, 30th March 2007 at Nuestra Sra. Del Carmen Parish Church.

Interment follows immediately at the Pulong Buhangin Catholic Cemetery, Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
Frieda Hizon Castro (ashes)	Mt. Carmel Church New Manila, Q.C.	March 29, 2007 8:00 pm	to be announced later
Graciano Natividad, Sr.	Chapel-5 Araneta Ave., Q.C.	March 29, 2007 after the 12nn Mass	Himlayang Pilipino Memorial Park
Demetria S. Flores	Chapel 14 Araneta Ave., Q.C.	March 31, 2007 after the 8:00 am Mass	Holy Cross Memorial Park

For your Classified and Obituary Ads please call:

☎ **637-2008**

"One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in his Temple." **Psalm 27:4**

DR. MERCEDES M. LEUTERIO

Professor, UST Graduate School
Professor, Polytechnic University of the Philippines
Professor, Rizal Technological University
President, UST Graduate School Alumni Assoc.
Former Dean, College of Commerce, San Sebastian College

Peacefully joined our Heavenly Father on March 25, 2007 at 80 years old.

She is survived by her children **Renato**, **Roy** and **Nene**, **Rommel** and **Marie**, **Rachel** and **Joey Hizon**, **Rex** and **Malou**, **Winnie** (†) and **Noel Lim**, **Rickey** and **Dinna** and her beloved grandchildren **Ino**, **Arvin**, **Miggs**, **Anco**, **Mikey**, **Ali**, **Ricardo**, **Katrin**, **Gia**, **Molly**, **Lissi**, **Paul**, **Vinney** and **Jose**.

Her remains lie in state at La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City. Interment will be on Saturday, March 31, 2007 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, after a 9:00 a.m. mass at the San Nicolas de Tolentino Parish Church near Congressional Avenue, Quezon City (for a map of the church, you may call 817-5657 and ask for Roda).

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Tax guru Mamalateo at CREBA realty tax forum

LAWYER VICTORINO C. MAMALATEO, CONSIDered the country's taxation guru, spoke at Public Forum on Real Estate Taxation sponsored by the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations (Creba) at the Hotel Intercontinental ballroom held on March 27.

Mamalateo assisted in formulating fiscal policies and drafting revenue measures and preparing revenue regulations, rulings, circulars and other issuances.

He was chair of the committee tasked to revise and consolidate regulations in income taxation; a member of the VAT executive committee that studied and drafted the original and expanded VAT laws.

Mamalateo served as president and vice-president for internal affairs of the Tax Management Association of the Philippines (TMAP), executive vice-president, Government Association of Certified Pubic Accountants (GACPA). He attended training courses at the Asian Institute of Management, Makati; Versailles, France; Arizona, USA; Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and Germany.

Judge Juan Luna High Batch 73 Section Rizal outing

BATCH 73 SECTION RIZAL OF JUDGE JUAN LUNA High School, Quezon City will hold their outing at Nick Pilares Resthouse, San Carlos, Pangasinan on Saturday, May 19, 2007. Detailed of homecoming for June 2 will also be tackled on the said outing. For more info, please contact Josie Santillan Jimenez - 480-5393, 233-2370, CP 0919-3647783, Chito Celestial - 455-6202, CP 0918-4089611 and Rudy San Gabriel at 0919-4413140.

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Vice-President (SG 27, Item # 87)

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INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (CAGELCO II) is inviting all interested bidders to pre-qualify and to bid for the following projects:

1. Supply and Installation of Automatic Voltage Regulator (AVR), 3-units, rated 167kVA each, 1Ø Nominal Voltage at 7620 Volts, ONAN cooling system.
2. Supply of Pre-Stressed Concrete and Wood Poles for distribution and sub-transmission lines.

To be qualified, bidder must have fully complied with the following:

1. Accreditation Requirements (for submission to the Accreditation Committee Chairman, Clarance E. Jacinto)
    a. Company Profile
    b. Business Registration
    c. Business Permit
    d. BIR/VAT Certificate
    e. Latest Income Tax Return (ITR)
    f. List of Clients for a period of three (3) years
    g. Financial Statement
    h. Compliance with the must technical specifications
2. Must be able to pay P5,000.00 for Item #1 and P2,000.00 for Item #2 for bid documents during the pre-bid conference.

CAGELCO II reserves the right to reject any/or all bid without any reason, waive any formality therein, accept proposal most advantageous to the cooperative and assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify any bidder for expenses or losses that may be incurred in the preparation of bid nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

Pre-bid conference and bidding schedules shall be informed to all qualified bidders through fax and mails.

Deadline for submission of requirements – April 13, 2007.

(Sgd.) BLANDINA Y. MADAMBA
BID Manager/PBAC Chairman

Noted by:
(Sgd.) GABRIEL A. TORDESILLAS
General Manager

CAGAYAN II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Macanaya District, Aparri, Cagayan
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(PDI - March 29 & 30, 2007)

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A29

PNOC unit to use algae as biodiesel source

To sign deal with US technology and business developer

By Abigail L. Ho

WANTING TO EXTRACT BIOFUELS from as many sources as possible, PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp. (PNOC-AFC) is now considering using algae as another feedstock for biodiesel by next year.

"Part of our medium-term plan is the development and eventual commercialization of our next generation of biofuels, algae being the most promising," PNOC-AFC president and chief executive Peter Anthony Abaya said.

He said initial data from a test facility in the United States using algae as biodiesel feedstock revealed that a one-hectare area of algae could produce between 1,600 tons and 2,000 tons of oil a year.

This compared with three tons of oil from one hectare of jatropha and six tons of oil from one hectare of palm, he said.

"These are amazing volumes for a pilot unit. With this kind of volume, it is certain that the production cost of diesel will be kept at low levels," he said.

Apart from the higher oil yield, he said it took only $25 to produce a ton of oil from algae, only 5 percent the cost of deriving oil from one hectare of palm.

"It's the next generation of biofuels—larger amounts, smaller areas required, lower cost of production, high-quality diesel," he said in an interview. "We'll know in the next 30 days if the technology could already go commercial. As of now, 1,600-2,000 tons per hectare has been achieved in the test facility. That's more than commercial."

He said he would be going back to the US next month, possibly to close the deal with the algae technology and business developer, which he declined to name.

The US eco-technology company is pioneering the algae-to-biofuel technology, which banks on the ability to mass produce algae and maximize its oil yield so this can be used as biodiesel feedstock.

The secondary algae by-product can be used in the production of animal feeds and agricultural fertilizer.

Abaya said the algae-to-biofuel technology that PNOC-AFC was looking at could propagate algae using little water even on non-arable land.

The algae "plantations" could also be placed close to industrial facilities to enable it to absorb more carbon dioxide. This, through the process of photosynthesis, would accelerate the growth of algae.

The algae's absorption of carbon dioxide from the environment and from industrial flue stacks would also be of great help to the environment.

PNOC-AFC could take advantage of this by entering into agreements for the sale of these carbon emission reduction credits.

Under the Kyoto Protocol, of which the Philippines is one of the 163 signatories, firms that invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency, improved land use, forestry and agricultural practices, and methane control programs will generate emission credits that can be traded for or developed into financial instruments, including actual funds.

The same protocol requires developed countries to limit their greenhouse gas emissions, but at the same time allows them to purchase carbon credits that they can use to offset their excess carbon emission.

Cebu Pacific ties up with car rental firm

By Riza T. Olchondra

BUDGET CARRIER CEBU PACIFIC has appointed European car rental firm Europcar as its official inland transport in a co-marketing deal, the two parties announced Tuesday night.

Through the partnership, passengers can avail of Europcar's transport services through Cebu Pacific's website (www.cebupacificair.com), which will go live on April 1, as well as through customer service and reservations hotline, travel agents and walk-up booths at the airport.

Initially, Europcar will operate in Cebu and Manila with a combined fleet of 150 cars, all of which will bear both Cebu Pacific and Europcar's logos, president Ma. Socorro Clavano said.

The joint services will then be expanded to Davao, Iloilo, Cagayan and Bacolod later in the second quarter of this year.

"It is a value-added service for Cebu Pacific customers. Cebu Pacific will basically enable customers to book their flight and car rental at the same time. Cebu Pacific flyers will also get a special discounted rate once they present their boarding passes at the Europcar booth," said Cebu Pacific's vice president for marketing and product, Candice Iyog.

Iyog said Cebu Pacific and Europcar have a revenue sharing arrangement for their joint marketing efforts but declined to give further details.

Cebu Pacific is the country's leading budget carrier while Europcar has been "Europe's Leading Car Hire Company" for the last four years and the "World's Leading Leisure Car Rental Company" for the last three.

Europcar is represented in 170 countries with an average fleet of more than 220,000.

UNITED Laboratories Inc. chair Jocelyn Campos-Hess receives from President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the Employers Confederation of the Philippines' 2006 Kapatiran sa Industriya (Kapatid) Award. Unilab won the award for its outstanding practices in industry relations, quality and productivity and social accountability. With The President was Ecop president Ortiz-Luis Jr. (left) while Campos-Hess was joined by company vice chair Clinton Campos Hess (right).

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All-star Pinoy quest for culinary gold

The RP team will present a collection of familiar and easy-to-appreciate recipes

LE TOQUE Blanche (LTB) Philippines has assembled a topnotch team of Filipino chefs that will compete at the Hong Kong International Culinary Classic (HKICC) at the HK Food Expo (HOFEX) in May.

The Philippine National Culinary Team that will vie with the world's best in Hong Kong is headed by no less than the country's most bemedaled chef, Ariel Manuel of

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Junior Culinary Workshop: (JCW) for Kids, Ages 6-10 yrs. old; April 11 & 13 (W & F) 9 a.m. - 12 n.n. DAY 1 - Strawberry Shorkcake, Popsicle Crunch, Circus Cookie Train, Vanilla Cookie Windmills and Purple Cow Milk Shake. ACTIVITY 1 - Kitchen Safety, Kitchen Math,Table Setting and Napkin Folding. DAY 2 - Meatballs Boat, Baked Beans and Franks, No Baked Macaroni and Cheese and Fruit Smoothies. ACTIVITY 2 - White Chocolote, Basket with Strawberry Cookies. **Fee: P2,000**. Next Batch: May 9 & 11, 2007

Young People's Cook In: (YPCI) for Teens: 13 yrs. old & up; April 24, 26, 28 (T, TH, S) 9 a.m.-1 p.m. DAY 1-Bacon Wrapped Apple Burger, Crustless Spinach Quiche, Fish & Chips with Tartar Dressing. Taco Salad and Corn Bread. ACTIVITY 1 - Simple Food Plating Techniques; Fruit & Vegetable Carving. DAY 2-Angel Hair in Chicken Scallopini, Lasagna, Stuffed Pizza (Chicago Style), Fruity Pannacota. ACTIVITY 2-Homemade Pasta Dough, Classic White & Red Sauces. DAY 3-Granola Bars, Black Forest Cupcake, Blueberry Crumble & Creamy Cinnamon Rolls. ACTIVITY 3-Simple Packaging Designs for Goodies. **Fee: P3,000**. Next Batch: May 22, 24 & 26, 2007

ONE-DAY SPECIALS FOR ADULTS

Steaks and Roast Galore: (By Popular Demand) April 14 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Beef Tournados with Mustard Sauce, Pan Roasted Rosemary Chicken with Basil Mashed Potatoes Pan Ajus, Roasted Pork with Apple sauce, Crispy Salmon with Siciliana Sauce, Osso Buco Steak with lecture and preparation of basic steak, sauces, marinades and techniques of grilling. P1,000

Japanese Cooking: April 21 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Tempura, Sukiyaki, Miso Soup, Kamameshi, 3 kinds of Sushi and Salmon Sashimi. Special Features: Teriyaki Sauce & Fish Ball Teriyaki. P900

Coffee 101 (Barista Class): April 21 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Coverage: Coffee history, Coffee Process, Trouble shooting, Machine know-how-proper grinding. Techniques to perfect froth. Actual preparation of popular **Traditional Hot Coffee Concoction**: Espresso, Cappuccino, Latte, etc.; **Cold Coffee Concoction and Spin**. P1,500.

Nego Pinoy Ventures: Start Your Own Business April 28 (Sat) 2 - 6 p.m. Baking Product Application w/ Maya Mixes; Waffle Dog, Brownies, Butterscotch Cookies, Carrot Cake, Rhum Cake. Includes: Lecture on Sale Profit Analysis. P500

Bartending: April 28 (Sat) 2-6 p.m. Basic Tools, Classifications of Wine & Spirits, Types of Bar Glasses & Usage, Mixing, Serving of Popular Cocktail Drinks including Garnishing with wine Tasting & Snacks. P1,500.

CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON FOR ADULTS

Fundamentals of Bakery Production: April 10-13 / 24-27 (T-F) 2 - 6 p.m. Basic & commercial baking techniques applicable to the use of various ready mixes, yeast breads, quick breads, pies, cookies & cakes w/ Free Baking Cookbook includes workshop exercise for Commercial Scale Productions. P5,000

Basic Culinary: April 17-20 (T-F) / May 2-5 (W-S) 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Proper hygiene, sanitation & safety; nutrition & nutritional cooking; proper mis-en-place of mirepoix, stocks, soups, sauces, marinades, use of herbs & spices combinations, proper purchasing, storage, techniques of disjointing & boning poultry, filleting fish & meat fabrication. With actual preparation of dishes from appetizer, salad, eggs, pasta, seafoods, poultry & meats, dessert including garnishing for plate presentation. P6,000.

Advanced Culinary: (German & Mediterrenean Cuisine) April 18, 19 & 20 (W-F) 2 - 6 p.m. 3 Kinds of Eintopf (Soup), Pichelsteiner (Veg.) White Beans Eintopf, Old German Potato Soup, German & Hungarian Style Goulash, Saurbraten, Konigsberg (Meatballs), Pork Knuckles w/ Saurkraut, Breaded Fish Con Pellati Sauce (Brudet); Croatian Beef Salsa, Risotto Stuffed Calamari, White Beans Smoked Bacon & Penne, Boiled Squid w/ Potato & Olive Oil (Sepia), provisions & costings. P5,000

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108; or e-mail us at *mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph*

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PediaSure mom Christine Jacob-Sandejas with daughter Gabby

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PROMO MECHANICS:

1. Promo is open to all mothers with children aged 1 to 10 years old.
2. To join, mothers are required to:
   - Write a first-hand account of how she deals with her hard-to-feed child/children and how PediaSure helped in making her child/children healthier (maximum of two pages double-spaced).
   - Attach a copy of her picture with her hard-to-feed child/children.
   - Enclose an Official Receipt from any store, as proof of purchase of at least 1 PediaSure product.
   - 1 Story + 1 Picture +1 Official Receipt = 1 Entry
3. All entries must be sent either by regular mail to:"PEDIASURE CIRCLE OF SURE MOMS" c/o PND Marketing Department, Abbott Laboratories, 102 EDSA corner Madison St., Mandaluyong City or via e-mail to: pediasuremoms.ph@abbott.com.
4. Five winning entries will be chosen based on the following criteria:
   - Impact of PediaSure on the children (i.e. in terms of improvement in height & weight) = 50%
   - Creativity, style and manner of the moms' writing =50%
5. Each winner will receive Fifty Thousand Pesos (Php 50,000) as a cash prize. Plus their stories and pictures will be featured in leading magazines and/or newspapers as part of the "Hard-to- Feed Files" (1 print ad release per winner). All cash prizes are tax-free and non-transferable.
6. Promo period starts on March 15, 2007 and ends on April 30, 2007. The deadline of entries is on April 30, 2007 at 12:00 midnight.
7. The entries chosen will undergo a verification process before they are proclaimed as winners. Letters of notification will be sent to the winners by the 2nd week of May. The letters will indicate when, where and how the winners can claim their prizes. Winners must bring the notification letter and any official I.D.
8. Winners must claim their prizes within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notification letter. Prizes not claimed within 60 days from the date of receipt of the notification letter will be forfeited, with prior approval from a BFAD official in favor of Abbott Corporation. The winners declared by BFAD, Abbott Corporation and its representatives are final.
9. Winners will be announced in leading newspapers.
10. Employees of Abbott Corporation and its sister companies, distributors, agencies and the employees' relatives, up to the 2nd degree of affinity and consanguinity, are disqualified from joining the promo.

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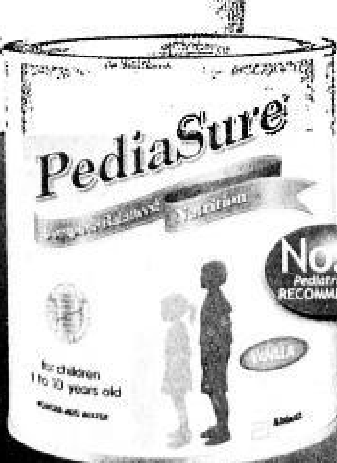

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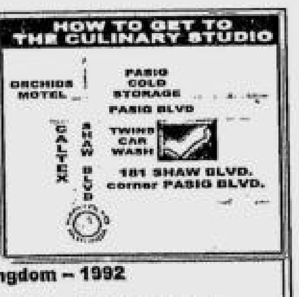

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Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied in 6 Cooking Schools in Hongkong

Morella Reynoso Gala
Valedictorian, I.H.M.E.S. International Hotel School, United Kingdom – 1992
Studied Cooking at Le Cordon Bleu, London
✓ ALSO TEACHES AT # 25 GLADIOLA ST. UPPER Q.M., BAGUIO CITY TEL. # (074) 444-8844

Ernest Reynoso Gala
Graduate : Italian Institute for Advanced Culinary & Pastry Arts under Chef Director John Nocita, Soverato, Calebria, Italy
Graduate : Le Moulin de Mougins Alain Llorca, Cannes, France
Graduate : Ecole Ritz Escoffier, Paris Ritz Hotel, France
Graduate : Ecole Lenotre Pattisserie, Plaisir Cedex, France
Graduate : Full Course at Thai Cooking School, Oriental Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand
Studied at Chopstick and Hongkong Town Gas Culinary Schools

MAR 31 SAT 1:30 - 5:00PM - 9 MONEY-MAKING FOR TEENS & ADULT BEGINNERS. CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES; CHOCOLATE CRINKLES; BUTTER SCOTCH BROWNIES; LENGUA DE GATO; CHEWY MALLOW BARS; RUSSIAN TEA COOKIES; VIRGIE *PANTALEON'S* DATE WALNUT COOKIES; SPECIAL POLVORON; LEBANESE DATE BOAT TARTS.
P1,800. *BY ERNEST*

APR 11 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - 8 GUARANTEED NEW JUMBO COOKIES & BARS 1. REVEL BARS; MACADAMIA NUT BARS; DECADENT BROWNIES; WHITE PLATTER SIZED COOKIES; PEANUT BUTTER JUMBOS; BIGGIE FRISBEE COOKIES; CHOCO OATMEAL COOKIES; SUPER FUDGY BROWNIES.
P1,800. *BY ERNEST.* ALL MELTS-IN-THE-MOUTH GOODIES! BAKESHOP OWNERS & STAFF

APR 12, 19 & 26 - CHILDREN'S COOKING & BAKING COURSE (3 THURSDAYS) 1:30 - 4:30PM - P4,800 - INCLUDING INGREDIENTS. FOR CHILDREN AGES 6 TO 14 YEARS. OVEN-BAKED CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS & POTATOES; SHRIMP ALA KING IN MUFFIN CUPS; PARTY FRUIT SALAD IN ICECREAM CONES; CHEESE MACAROONS; RAISIN WALNUT COOKIES; MEATLOAF SUPREME; YUMMY SPARERIBS W/ COLESLAW SALAD; MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ MUSHROOMS; MAGNOLIA CREAM CHEESE CHEWY BARS; TINY FRUIT CAKE BARS; CHOCO-PEANUTS IN PIE CRUST. THIS COURSE GIVEN ONLY ONCE A YEAR BY ERNEST & SYLVIA. ONLY 24 STUDENTS WILL BE ACCOMMODATED. PAID RESERVATION IS A MUST. THANK YOU!

APR 13 FRI 1:30 - 4:30PM - EASY HONGKONG RESTAURANT COURSE. SIZZLING CHINESE STYLE STEAKS W/ MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN; SHRIMP & CRAB CLAWS & BALLS IN NEST W/ SWEET & SOUR SAUCE; HONGKONG STYLE ASSORTED VEGETABLE PLATTER; MAGNOLIA STIR FRIED CHICKEN BREAST W/ CASUY; LAPU-LAPU IN CREAM OF CORN SAUCE; LOURDES FAT CRABS COOKED IN GINGER-GARLIC SPRITE.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

APR 14 SAT 1:30 - 5:30PM - 5 NEW CLASSIC ITALIAN PASTAS COURSE. *BY ERNEST.* P1,800. BAKED LASAGNA #1 LAYEREED W/ MONTEREY MEATS, RED & WHITE SAUCE; CANNELLONI (BIG ROLLS OF MEAT & VEGGIE FILLED PASTA BAKED IN CHEESE SAUCE); BONELESS MAGNOLIA CHICKEN LASAGNA BAKED IN LAYERS OF CREAM SAUCE; CENTURY TUNA EGGPLANT LASAGNA (LAYERS OF EGGPLANT & PASTA W/ TUNA, MAGNOLIA PARMESAN & MOZARELLA CHEESES W/ HUNT'S SPAGHETTI SAUCE); RIGATONI (BIG MACARONI) W/ SHRIMPS; ITALIAN SAUSAGE IN CREAMY SAUCE

APR 16 MON 1:30 - 5:30PM - POPULAR JAPANESE DISHES 2. LEARN 8 DELICIOUS RECIPES! SHABU-SHABU W/ 2 SAUCES; ASSORTED CRISPY TEMPURA; GRILLED PORK & BEEF SLICE; UDON (VERY SPECIAL NOODLES); FRIED TOFU IN SPECIAL SAUCE; BREADED CHICKEN WINGS W/ VINEGAR SAUCE; JAPANESE MIXED FRIED RICE PLUS BONUS RECIPES OF COMPLETE SUSHI BAR.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

APR 17 TUE 1:30 - 5:15PM - 9 GUARANTEED NEW PECIAL COOKIES & BARS 2. *BY ERNEST.* P1,800. MISSISSIPPI MUD BARS; ROCKY ROAD BROWNIES; CHUNKY OATMEAL BARS; HEAVENLY DATE BARS; PEANUT BUTTER BROWNIES; MARSHMALLOW COOKIES; RICOA CHOCO IN FLAKY CUPS; PANDAN CRESCENTS; RUM BALLS. (COFFEESHOP & BAKESHOP OWNERS & STAFF).

APR 18 WED 1:30 - 5:30PM - ELEGANT PARTY DISHES 1. COCONUT TAPIOCA PUNCH; CORN & CHICKEN CHOWDER; BAKED SHRIMP & EGGS W/ BREAD TRIANGLES; AMERICAN STYLE BARBECUED PORK & CHICKEN W/ SPECIAL RICE & STUFFED TOMATOES; SPECIAL HAM PASTA BAKED CASSEROLE. HOW TO SET UP YOUR BUFFET TABLE; EASY NAPKIN FOLDING FOR ALL OCCASIONS.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

APR 20 FRI 1:30 - 5:00PM - PUT UP A STEAKHOUSE! LEARN THE TECHNIQUES TO COOKING THE JUICIEST MONTEREY PORTERHOUSE STEAKS; BEEF TENDERLOIN STEAK ALA POBRE; DELICIOUS HOMEMADE GRAVY; CAESAR SALAD; ROAST ORANGE PORK LOIN; BEST SELLING BAKED SPAGHETTI W/ 2 SAUCES. MAKE YOUR OWN CREPES SAMURAI.
P1,800. *BY ERNEST*

APR 21 SAT 1:30 - 5:15PM - LEARN THE SOFTEST SIOPAO DOUGH EVER! - THE MOST DELICIOUS SIOMAI; KUAPAO (PEKING SIOPAO W/ MEAT & PICKLED MUSTASA). FISH HEAD SOUP; CAMARON RELLENADO; QUIKIAM W/ RADISH SALAD; STEAMED LAPU-LAPU.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

APR 23 MON 1:30 - 5:30PM - FILIPINO RESTAURANT BESTSELLERS! SISIG CAPAMPANGAN; SIZZLING TADYANG NG BAKA; DENCIO'S STYLE MAGNOLIA CHICKEN FILLET BBQ ON STICKS; KWEK-KWEK (COATED QUAIL EGGS ON STICKS W/ SWEET & SOUR SAUCE); CRISPY BUCHI ASADO PAO.
P1,800. *BY ERNEST*

APR 24 TUE 1:30 - 5:30PM - AUTHENTIC ITALIAN RESTAURANT COOKING COURSE 2. BY ERNEST. P1,800. VERY DELICIOUS SICILIAN SALAD W/ CREAMY GARLIC DRESSING; STUFFED MUSHROOMS W/ ITALIAN SAUSAGE, BASIL, TOMATOES, MOZARELLA IN WHITE SAUCE; FONDUTA (CHEESE DIP W/ BREAD TRIANGLES); GRILLED HUGE MONTEREY PORK CHOPS W/ MARSALA; PAN FRIED TENDER MONTEREY LAMB CHOPS W/ GARLIC-BAKED TOMATOES, BABY CARROTS, POTATOES, CAPERS & GREEN OLIVES. YOU WILL LOVE THESE FAMILY STYLE RECIPES!

APR 25 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM 7 FINGER PARTY FOOD W/ COCKTAIL PUNCH. QUICHE LORRAINE (CHEESE CUSTARD SQUARES); MONTEREY BEEF TERIYAKI KEBABS W/ GARLIC YOUGURT; CENTURY TUNA IN EGG POUCHES (HOMEMADE CREPES); DEBONED & STUFFED MAGNOLIA CHICKEN WINGS; CRUNCHY W/ NUTS FRIED CHICKEN LOLLIPOPS W/ TARTARE SAUCE; CRISPY STUFFED SHRIMPS; MAGNOLIA CHICKEN POPSICLES W/ BROWN MUSHROOM GRAVY; NEW YORK RESTAURANT SCHOOL CHEF INSTRUCTRESS LORRIE REYNOSO'S PUNCH.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

APR 27 & MAY 4 (2 FRIDAYS) 1:30 - 4:30PM - MAKE MONEY BY LEARNING 15 DELICIOUS RECIPES IN TWO LESSONS. P2,600. INCLUDING INGREDIENTS. A SPECIAL FRUIT CAKE; 3 VERSIONS OF BROWNIES (DOUBLE CHOCOLATE FUDGE, CHOCO-CARAMEL FUDGE, WALNUT-TOPPED DARK & LIGHT BARS); 5 DIFF. KINDS OF WELL-KNOWN MUFFINS; 5 DIFF. KINDS OF CHOCOLATE-CHIP COOKIES; MACADAMIA NUT COOKIES.
BY ERNEST

APR 28 SAT 1:30 - 5:30PM - ELEGANT PARTY DISHES 2. CRISPY BREADED SHRIMPS W/ HOISIN SAUCE; ROAST MONTEREY LEG OF PORK W/ GLAZED CARROTS & MARBLED POTATOES; BAKED MONTEREY HAMBURGER CORN-TOPPED CASSEROLE; CRAB BISQUE; FLAMING BAKED ALASKA (ICECREAM CAKE). **COURSE INCLUDES ACTUAL TABLE SETTING & SERVICE (FORMAL & INFORMAL) FOR HOMES & RESTAURANTS.**
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 1 TUE 1:30 - 5:30PM - ALL NEW ROASTS & PASTAS COURSE 2.
***BY ERNEST.* P1,800.**
CHATEAUBRIAND W/ BERNAISE SAUCE (MONTEREY BEEF TENDERLOIN); MONTEREY ROAST RACK OF LAMB W/ CREAMY CUCUMBER SAUCE; TENDER ROAST BABY BACK MONTEREY PORK RIBS W/ SPECIAL BBQ SAUCE; BAKED LASAGNA W/ RICOTTA & MOZARELLA CHEESE; SPECIAL MAGNOLIA CHICKEN SPAGHETTI W/ 4 CHEESES. PLUS MANY BONUS RECIPES OF DIFF. SAUCES & GRAVIES FOR MEATS & PASTAS!

MAY 2 WED 1:30 - 5:00PM - LEARN 6 SUGAR-FREE YUMMY RECIPES MADE W/ EQUAL SPOONFUL & 4 COFFEESHOP BESTSELLERS MADE W/ REGULAR SUGAR! DELICIOUS SUGAR-FREE CHICKEN BARBECUE W/ SALAD GREENS W/ VINAIGRETTE DRESSING; SUGAR-FREE POLVORON; SUGAR-FREE MANGO CHEESECAKE; SUGAR-FREE ORANGE CHEESECAKE; CHOCO CHEESECAKE; ALMOST SUGAR-FREE OATMEAL WALNUT COOKIES; REGULAR COFFEE CHOCO BARS; STARBUCKS' STYLE RAISIN WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES & CHOCO CHIP WALNUT OATMEAL COOKIES.
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

MAY 3 THU 1:30 - 5:00PM - ALL NEW RECIPES IDEAL FOR FRANCHISING BUSINESS! FASTFOOD OR FOODCARTS! DEEP FRIED ADOBO SIOPAO W/ "KALISKIS", STEAMED SHRIMP BALLS; STEAMED CRABSTICKS W/ GLASS NOODLES; SINGAPOREAN BEEF RENDANG (MONTEREY BEEF IN COCONUT CREAM), SINGAPOREAN STYLE MANGO SHAKE; COFFEE SHAKE, ICE CHEE (TEA W/ LYCHEES).
P1,680. *BY SYLVIA*

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THE CONSUMER

Education brings vigilance

By Linda B. Bolido

CONSUMERS ARE EXPECTED TO BE vigilant so they are not victimized but, if they do not know just what rights they have and what they can reasonably expect from establishments, how can they protect themselves from being short-changed or sold shoddy products?

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) believes consumers need further education on their rights and other important issues so they are armed against deception and scams. At a time when consumption is on the rise, Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila said people need skills and knowledge to make wise choices and to avoid being duped.

Favila said informed consumers could recognize and avoid a rip-off, scam or fraud. They would also know how and where to complain.

"Consumer education has been one of our primary strategies in the campaign to empower and protect the buying public," Favila said. One important vehicle for consumer education is the department's weekly radio program, Konsyumer Atbp. (KATBP) that celebrated recently its second anniversary.

The program seeks to raise public awareness on product standards and other consumer-related concerns. Undersecretary for Consumer Welfare Zenaida Cuison Maglaya said, through the radio program, the department tried to turn listeners into vigilant and responsible consumers. The show was also a convenient channel for the public to give feedback or report any illegal activity in the marketplace.

KATBP is an initiative of the DTI's Bureau of Product Standards (DTI-BPS), in partnership with the Philippine Product Safety and Quality Foundation and ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

BPS director Jesus L. Motoomull said one DTI important initiative to mark KATBP's second anniversary was a partnership with the Department of Energy's Philippine Efficient Lighting Market Transformation Project and the Philippine Lighting Industry Association, the Palit Ilaw Program that promotes energy-efficient lamps to reduce power consumption and save on energy costs.

Cementing the future

The Cement Manufacturers Association of the Philippines, which is now headed by Dr. Ernesto M. Ordoñez as president, offers some tips on how to tell if the cement you are buying is safe.

The advice will also save you money as you are at least assured that your cement will last for a reasonable length of time, instead of breaking up at even the slightest pressure.

Primarily, Ordoñez's advice is to buy only cement that complies with product standards.

He says the law requires minimum information to be permanently imprinted on each bag of cement.

1. For Philippine-made cement, the bag must bear the BPS' Product Quality and Safety Mark or "PS" Mark.

This assures buyers that the product complies with the country's quality and safety standards.

Another important information to look for is the PS license number printed below the PS mark.

Look also for brand name. Locally manufactured cement is identified as "Made in the Philippines."

2. Imported cement must have the "Import Commodity Clearance Mark" or "ICC" mark on the bag. This also indicates that the product complies with Philippine quality and safety standards.

Look also for the ICC license number for imported cement printed below the ICC mark. Do not buy imported cement if the names and addresses of the foreign manufacturer or importer or trader are on removable stickers.

3. Portland cement T-I or Type-I is indicated by a single red band on the upper corner of the cement bag.

4. Portland-Pozzolan Cement T-IP, a blended cement, is indicated by three yellow-gold colored bands printed on the upper corner of the bag.

5. Portland Blast Furnace Slag Cement T-IS (a blended cement) is indicated by two blue bands printed on the upper corner of the bag.

When buying cement, do not accept bags without any color bands.

6. All cement sold in hardware stores shall be marked 40-kg, net mass per bag.

Buy only cement without any signs of hardening or does not have lumps. Whether the cement is locally made or imported, the date of manufacture must be stamped on each bag.

Send letters to The Consumer, Lifestyle Section, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City; or e-mail lbolido@inquirer.com.ph

What's the news behind the news?
- Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc
Editor in Chief, Philippine Daily Inquirer
What nonsense is this?
- Eugenia Duran-Apostol
Founder, Philippine Daily Inquirer
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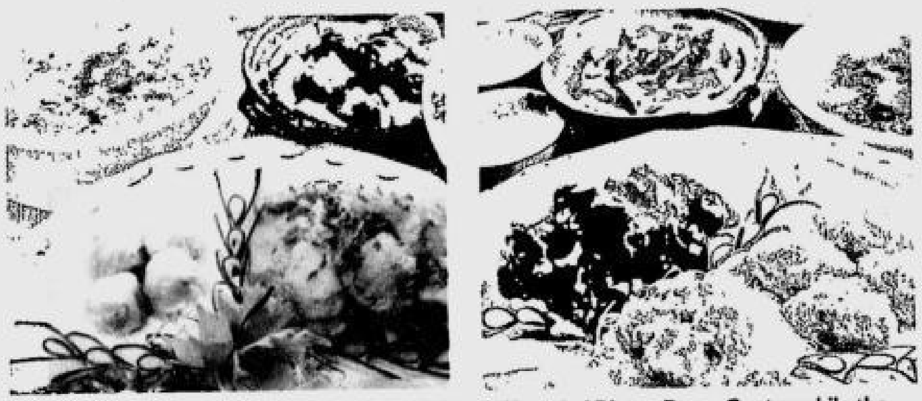
They launched the Philippine Daily Inquirer in defiance of the news blackout after Ninoy's assassination. Since then, Inquirer has become a beacon for fearless journalism in the country. As a fitting tribute, these champions of press freedom have made it to the venerable list of Time Magazine's Asian Heroes. Visit www.inquirer.net to know more about this campaign.



THE CHEF'S Savory Platters promo is available at Shanghai Bistro-Paseo Center while the Payday Lunch Buffet Promo is offered at Shanghai Bistro-Eastwood.

HEAVEN 'N Eggs offers value-for-money dinner baskets, such as Steak Fingers 'N Calamari Rings, Heaven's Fish 'N Chips Basket. Also available are Basket of Chickies, Brazil vs Germany, Chicken Teriyaki and Tempura Basket. For the health-conscious, there are Grilled Salmon Lite, Grilled Tilapia Fillet Lite served with brown rice, Grilled Vegetables and Pesto Omelet Blanca, Garden Salad with Shrimps and Mandarin Oranges. Heaven 'N Eggs is at Tomas Morato (3762674), Glorietta (8182792), Eastwood City (9121172) and Market! Market! (8893791).

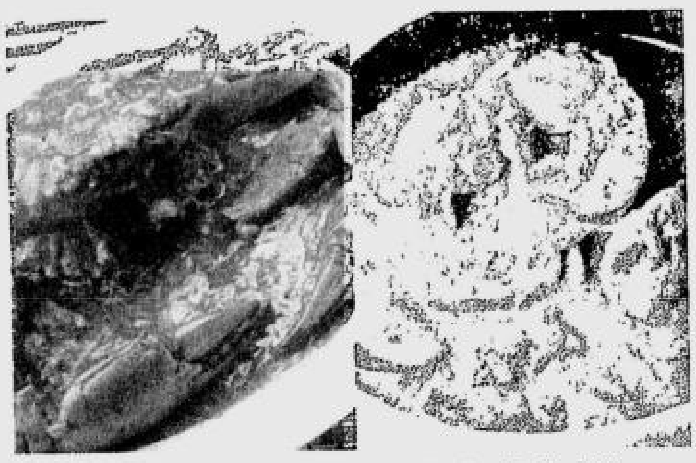
DINING OUT

Triple Shanghainese treat

SHANGHAI BISTRO, THE RESTAURANT serving authentic Shanghai cuisine, has a triple treat promo in its Eastwood City and Paseo Center-Makati branches this summer. The restaurant lets clients taste delectable delights from the East through three promos: Chef's Savory Platters, Friday Payday Lunch Buffet and Late Nite Dim Sum Combination. The Chef's Savory Platters, available only at Shanghai Bistro-Paseo Center, features two sets of dishes good for a group of four. At P1,000, Set One offers a dim sum combination of Steamed Vegetable Dumpling and Quail Egg Siomai, Minced Beef Soup with Chinese Parsley, Squid in Salt and Pepper, Sweet and Sour Pork, Bamboo Shoot with Black Mushroom, Steamed Rice, *buchi* and iced tea. Set Two, at P1,200, has Seafood Beancurd Soup, Beef Broccoli, Pork Ribs in Salt and Pepper, Chicken in Lemon Sauce, Pak Choi with Minced Garlic, Barbecue Pork Fried Rice; Almond Jelly and iced tea. At the Eastwood City in Libis, Shanghai Bistro gives regular clients its best-selling dishes in the Friday Payday Lunch Buffet for only P290 per person. The buffet is available 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Shanghai Bistro-Eastwood City has the affordable Late Nite Dim Sum Combination. Customers have three choices: Spicy Pork Fried Noodle and Duck Bun, P159; Soy Noodle and two pieces Siomai, P179; or Wanton Noodle and Siopao, P189. All three meals are served with Shanghai Bistro's green tea. All dishes are prepared by a team led by executive chef Wong Kam On and dim sum chef Daniel Leung. Shanghai Bistro branches are at 3/F, Paseo Center, Paseo de Roxas corner Sedeno Sts. Salcedo Village, Makati City, tel. 8928870, 8928872; and at Bldg. A, Eastwood City Walk 2, Libis, Quezon City, tel. 6877103, 6871077.

THE BELLEVUE HOTEL'S Poolside (tel. 7718181) features Halo-Halo Fiesta and Salad Bar on all Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays of March and April. The Halo-Halo Bar is open 11 a.m.-9 p.m., while the Salad Bar is open 5-10 p.m.

EDSA SHANGRI-LA celebrates graduation at any one of its food and beverage outlets. If you are in a group of five, you get a photo mug plus the chance to win other cool souvenir items until March 31. Heat offers all-time favorites like pizzas and *lechon* served fresh and crisp. You can also enjoy the exotic flavors of India and fiery Thai cuisine. Summer Palace serves authentic Cantonese cuisine while Paparazzi offers rustic Italian dishes. Call 6338888 local 2738 or 2739.



CRUSTASIA features Grand Singaporean Seafood Buffet, Friday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. (lunch) and 6-9 p.m. (dinner) at The Podium branch (tel. 7285463 or 6313857). The restaurant is introducing authentic Singaporean dishes that include Peranakan Chicken Curry, Thai Fish Pancake, Beef Rendang, Buttered Oatmeal Prawns, Char Tow Kueh, Claypot Chicken Rice, Cold Shanghainese Tofu, Fish Head Curry Soup, Hae Mee, Hokkien Fried Noodle, Thai Fish Pancake, Pomelo Salad, Thai Stuffed Eggplant, Thai Vegetable, and Mixed Sambal Seafood.

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EASTER DOUGHNUTS. Krispy Kreme rolls out egg-shaped doughnuts to celebrate Easter. With five designs and two flavors—chocolate and cream cheese icing—the doughnuts may substitute for eggs in the traditional Easter hunts. Krispy Kreme branches are located at Bonifacio High Street, The Fort, Taguig City; and at SM Megamall.

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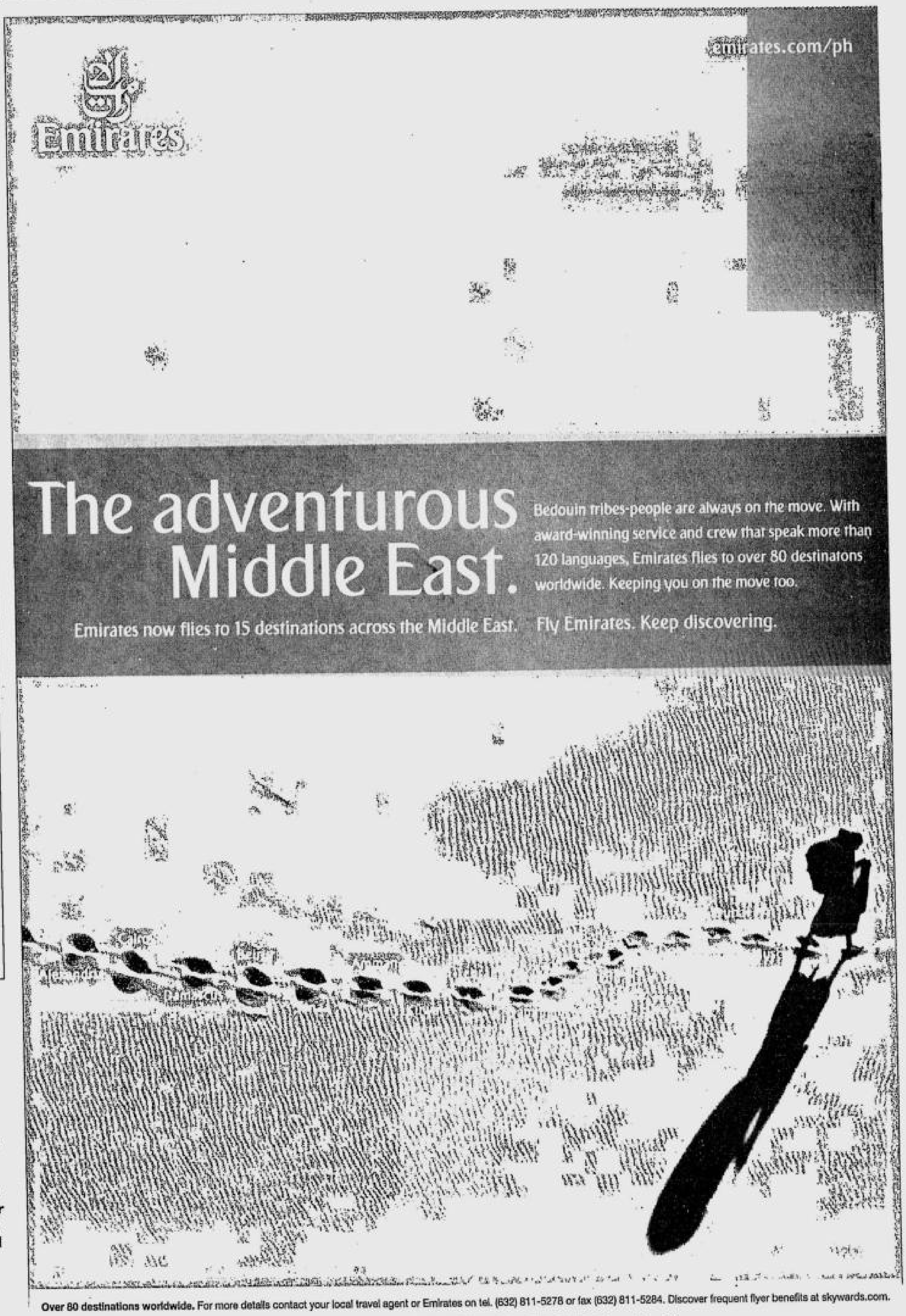

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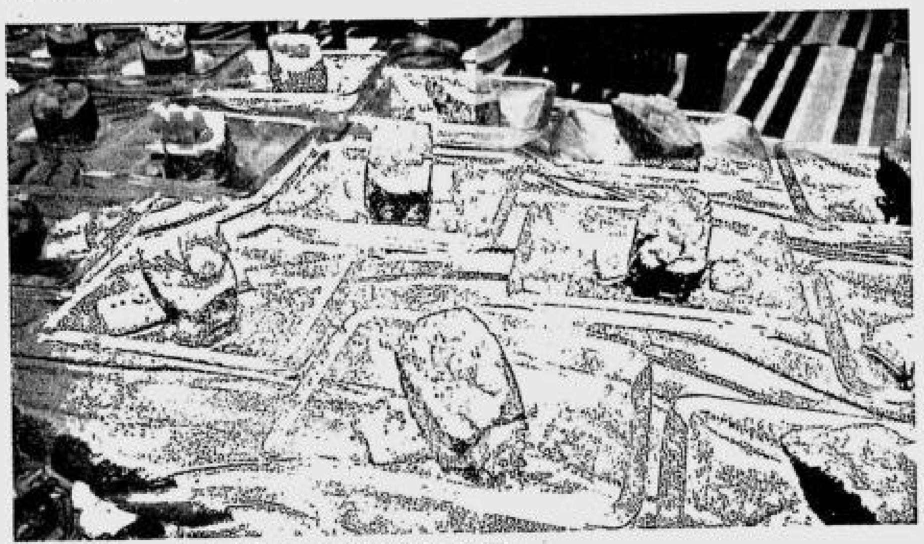
All-star Pinoy quest . . .

From page C1



SEARED Wagyu Beef with Leeks and Pickled Radish

Lolo Dad's Cafe.

Joining him in seeking the gold are Virgilio Timola, Makati Shangri-La Hotel; Arnold Guevarra, Mandarin Oriental Hotel; Anatolio Bleza, Makati Shangri-La Hotel; pastry chef Buddy Trinidad, Park Avenue Desserts. Heartthrob J. Gamboa of Cirkulo Restaurant is team manager.

At the HKICC, they will be competing in the Gourmet Team Challenge, where the team is required to make a cold buffet for 30 persons in 24 hours consisting of 27 different items (*tapas*, soup, appetizers, desserts, cakes, seafood and poultry platters, among others). Another is the World Association of Chefs Societies (WACS) Global Chef Challenge, a live market basket cooking event where the competitor makes a menu from the ingredients presented and cooks a four-course meal in five hours, the winner of which will represent Asia at the World Finals in Dubai in 2008.

Manuel and company will also compete in the Western Cuisine Chicken (Professional) & Western Cuisine (Professional) Red Mullet & Prawn 21/25, both live cooking events using chicken, red mullet and prawns respectively as main ingredients.

For pastry, there is Fantasy Table, another live event where competitors make two kinds of desserts in two hours.

Our theme, "Contemporary Cuisine in a Philippine Setting," is essentially a collection of familiar and easy-to-appreciate recipes that have been refined and will be presented on one-of-a-kind glassware pieces designed and manufactured by Bobby Castillo of Seagull Glassworks.

They will be set on tablecloths designed by Rajo Laurel and styled by Tina Bonoan. A real all-star Pinoy effort!

After having been to the practice sessions, there is nothing I would recommend more for those who enjoy fine food. The whole experience whets all the senses.

On April 22 and May 6, there will be a preview of our team's Hong Kong repertoire for the Gourmet Team Challenge. You can be a part of it all!

TEAM Captain Ariel Manuel in action

Join us for an afternoon of decadence packed with excellent food. Wine is sure to overflow. The cocktails promise to be the food event of the year. Proceeds from the event will help fund our culinary team.

Support your team and bask in the glory of the gold, which we are confident will finally be ours in 2007!

Seats are limited to 40 so please confirm ASAP. The fee is P3,000 net per person inclusive of wines, local beers, soft drinks, iced tea, coffee and teas. For reservations, please e-mail chefjgamboa@elcirkulo.com or call 8108735, 8102763. Wines will be sponsored by Jeff Yao of Philon Wines. The Heavy Cocktails begin at 6 p.m.

Thanks to Werdenberg International Corp., PTC, Philippine Airlines, Meat and Livestock Australia, Alternatives Food Corp., Mida Foods, Gourdo's, San Miguel Purefoods Corp., Brother's Burger, Golden Acres, Happy Living Fine Wine, Philon Wines for your support.

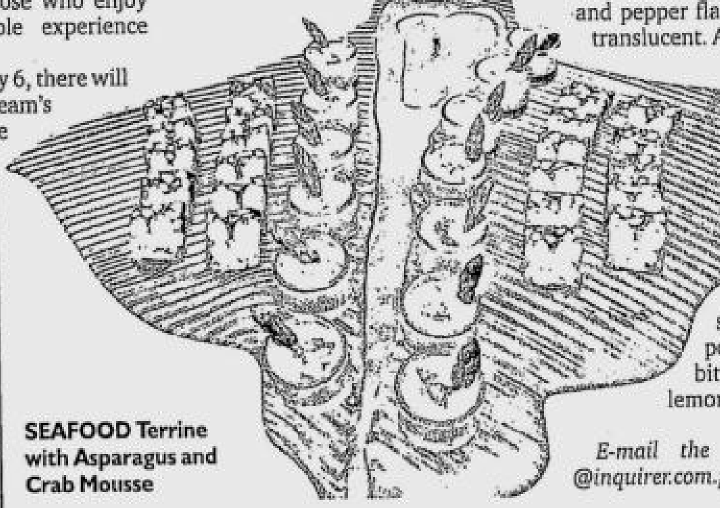
Seafood pasta recipe

Now back to our recipe request from last week ...

Pink Princess, here's the olive oil-based seafood pasta you requested! This is one of my favorites made of shrimp, garlic and capers!

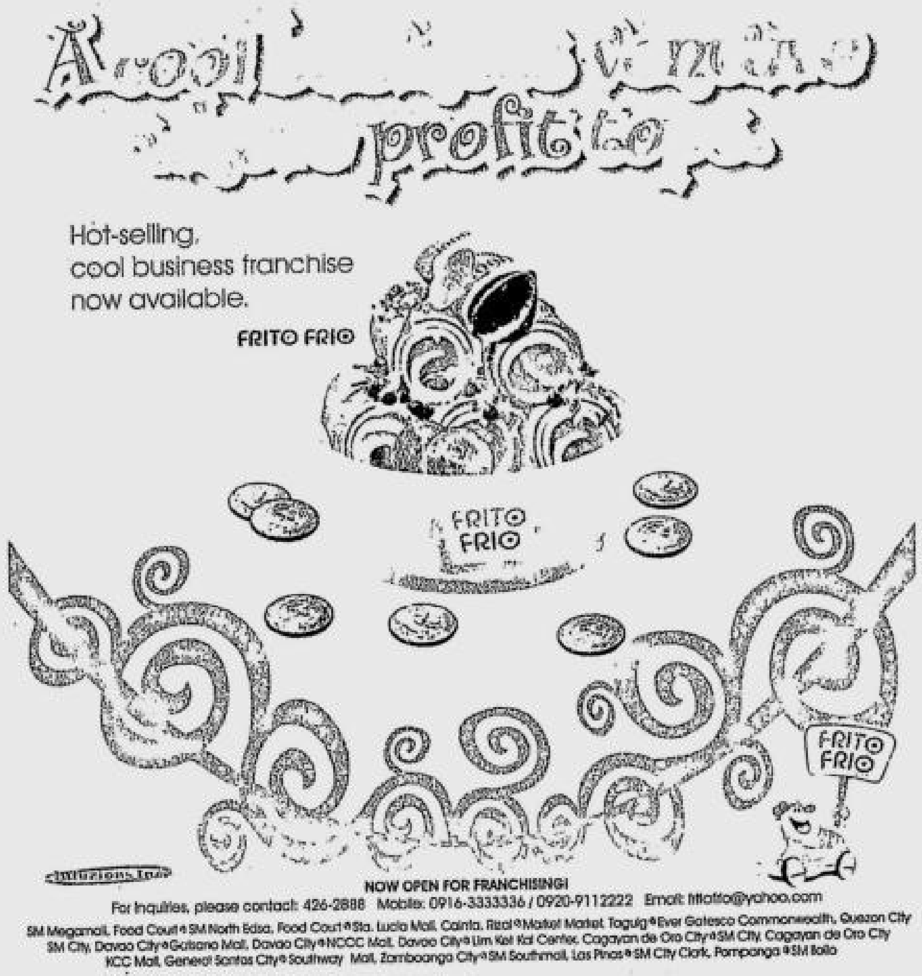
½ k pasta of choice, cooked just before making sauce
½ c extra virgin olive oil or ¼ c butter and ¼ c extra virgin olive oil
¼ c thinly sliced garlic
2 shallots, finely diced
2 tbsp capers, chopped
½ k shrimps, peeled, de-veined, tails intact
½ c dry white wine
¼ c finely chopped parsley leaves
1 c seafood or chicken stock
pinch of pepper flakes or chili powder, optional
salt and pepper
1 lemon, juiced

In a large skillet, melt butter in olive oil. Saute shallots, garlic, capers and pepper flakes until shallots are translucent. Add shrimps, cook until color changes. Remove the shrimp from the pan. Add wine with the parsley and cooked pasta and stock. Stir well and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle with a bit more olive oil and lemon juice before serving.



SEAFOOD Terrine with Asparagus and Crab Mousse

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph



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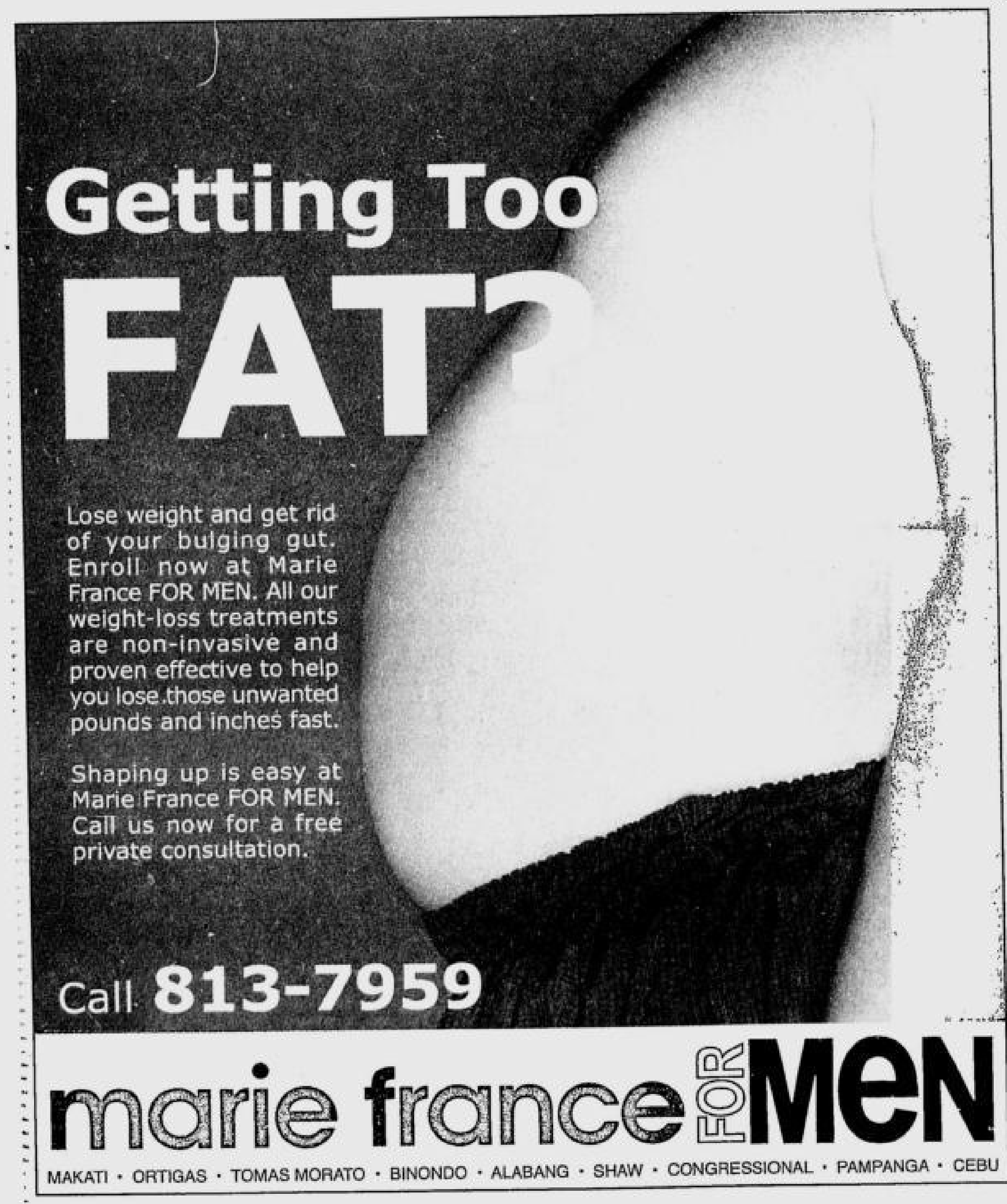

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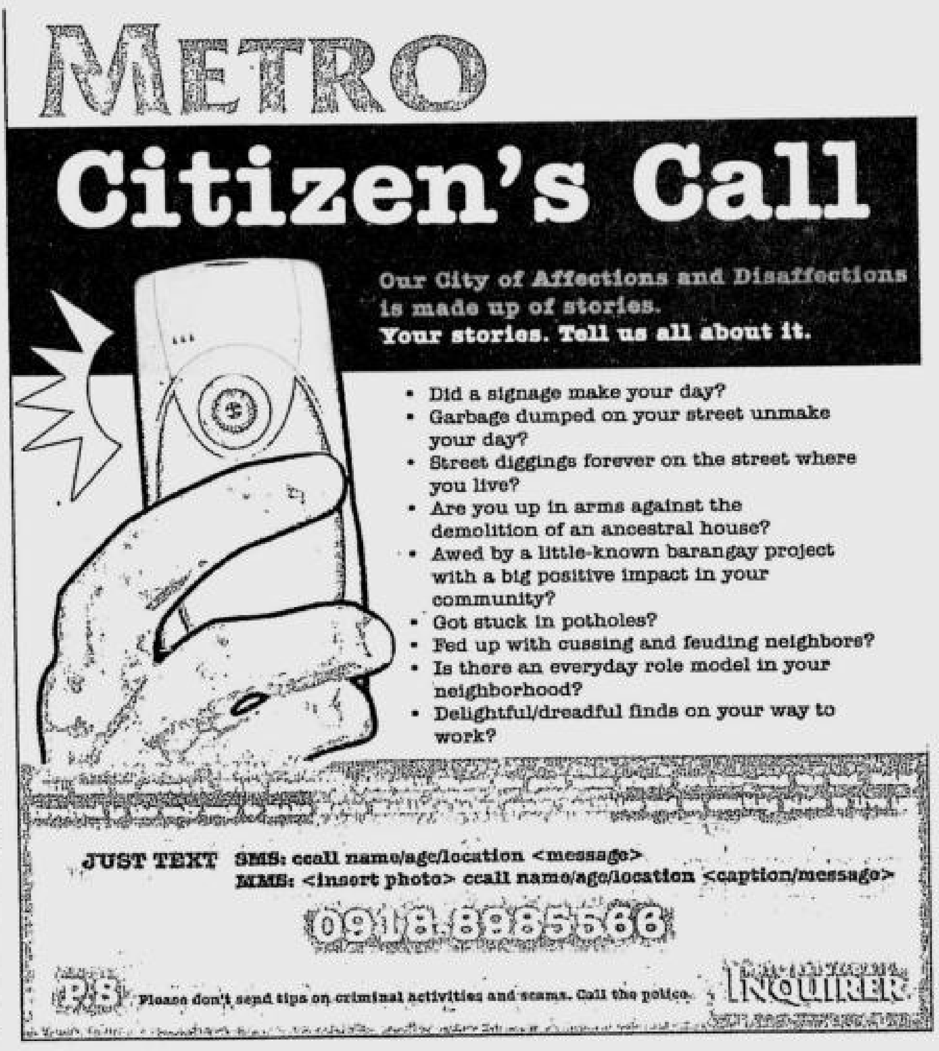

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- Delightful/dreadful finds on your way to work?
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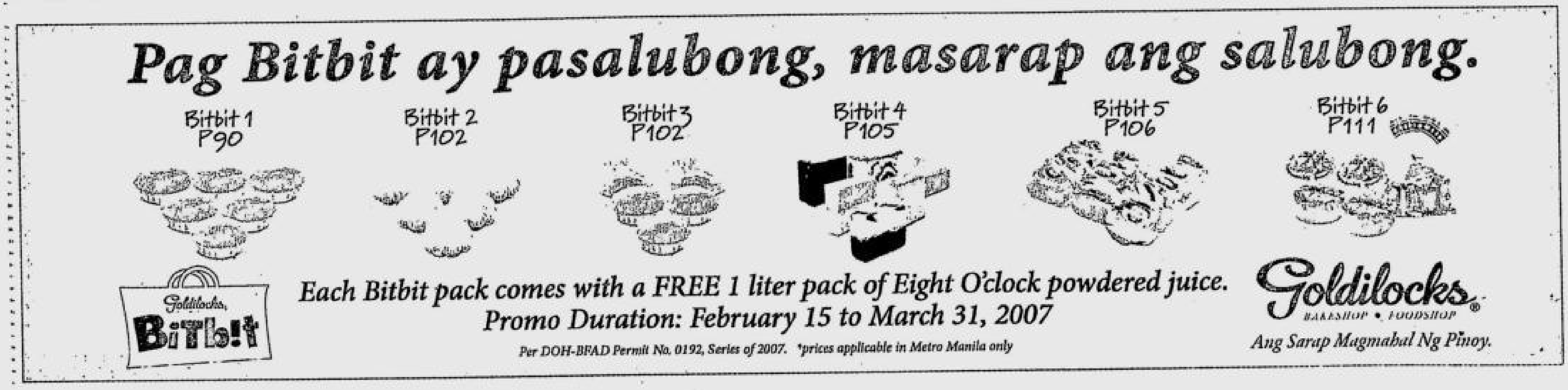
MMS: <insert photo> ccall name/age/location <caption/message>
0918.8985566
P8 Please don't send tips on criminal activities and scams. Call the police.
INQUIRER



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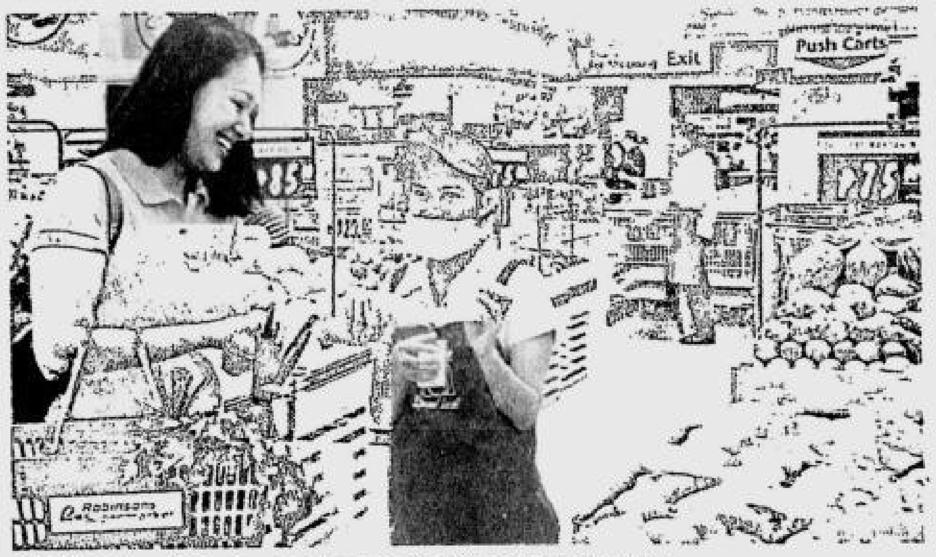


HAZEL Galvez of Massimo's Café shops at Robinsons Supermarket.

Partners for healthy, inexpensive dishes

CHEF-RESTAURATEUR HAZEL GALVEZ of the charming Italian café Massimo's in scenic Tagaytay City knows a reliable supplier of the ingredients she needs is crucial in the success of her venture.

She relies on Robinsons Supermarket to provide her a wide array of fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and poultry. Daily deliveries assure her and her customers of the highest quality dishes which include *bistecca a la fiorentina*, *osso bucco*, spaghetti a la *vongole*, pistachio gelato and panna cotta.

Galvez also supports Robinsons' Eat Well Spend Less Campaign that promotes a healthier lifestyle and overall wellness for its customers. The campaign encourages healthy eating at affordable prices, especially with its Apple Tag Specials that offer marked-down items within the reach of more consumers.

MEDITERRANEAN Baked Fish

The supermarket also disseminates information on health and nutrition through free brochures and activities like nutrition counseling, dental consultation, bone scanning, blood pressure and blood-sugar testing.

Galvez shares some healthy and not-so-expensive recipes from Massimo's, which was named after her 5-year-old son (tel. 046-4130881 and 0916-3715449), that people can do using ingredients from Robinsons Supermarket.

Mediterranean Baked Fish

3 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced into thin rounds
2 onions, sliced
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 tbsp olive oil, for drizzling
2 garlic cloves, minced
1½ lb skinless fish fillets (e.g., *apahap* or local bass, bambangin or sea bream, *tilapia*, or salmon)
1 bay leaf
3 sprigs of thyme
3 tomatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
1 tbsp calamansi juice
¼ c water
Salt
Pepper

Cook potatoes in lightly salted water until done. In another pan, saute the onions in 2 tbsp vegetable oil over medium-low heat for about five minutes, stirring frequently. Add garlic and saute until onions are soft.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Layer half the potato slices in a baking dish. Cover with half of the onions and season with salt and pepper.

Place the fish fillets on top of the vegetables and tuck the herbs in between. Top with the tomato slices, and then the remaining onions and potatoes.

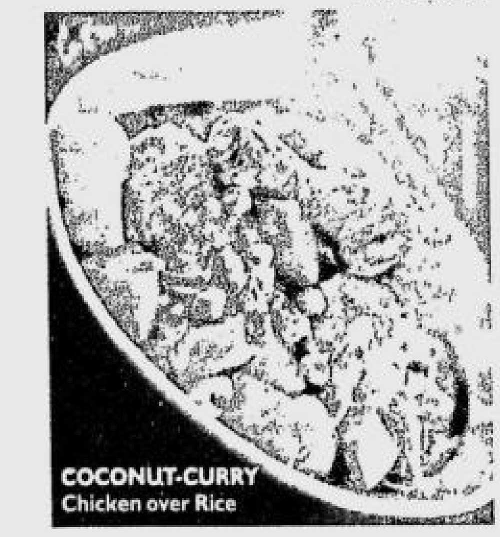
Pour over the *calamansi* juice, water and drizzle with the olive oil. Bake uncovered, for about 25 minutes or until the potatoes are tender and fish is cooked. Serve hot.

Serves four to six.

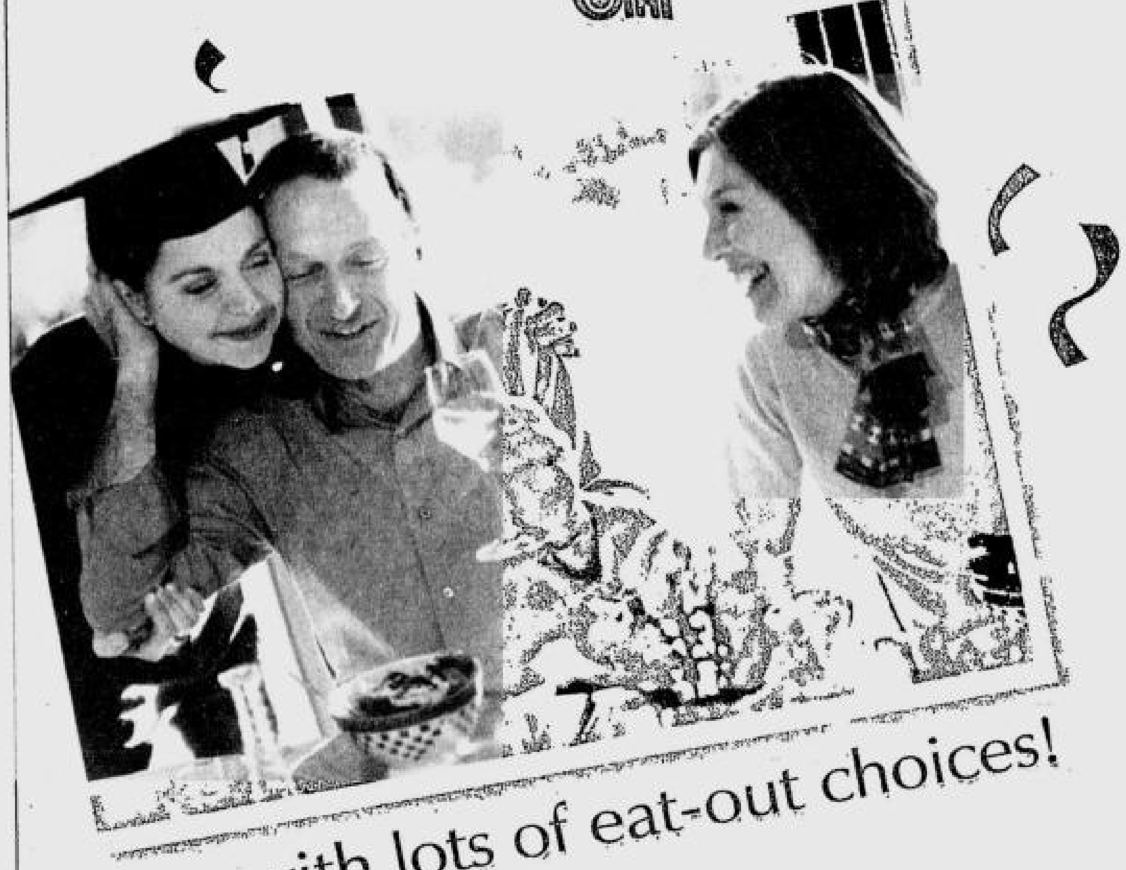
Coconut-Curry Chicken over Rice

¼ c coconut milk
3 tbsp finely chopped onion
1 tbsp minced fresh cilantro, plus more for serving
1 ½ tbsp fish sauce
½ tbsp *calamansi* juice
1 tsp sugar

PARTNERS/ D3



COCONUT-CURRY Chicken over Rice



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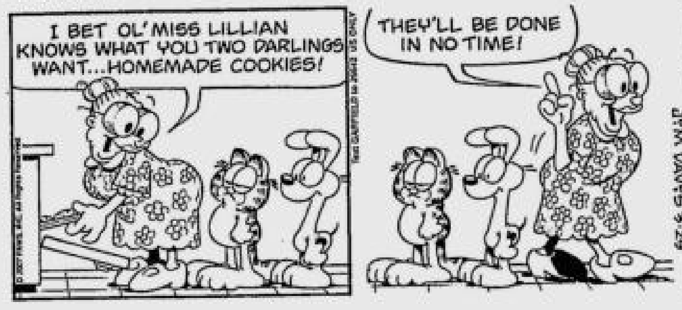
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

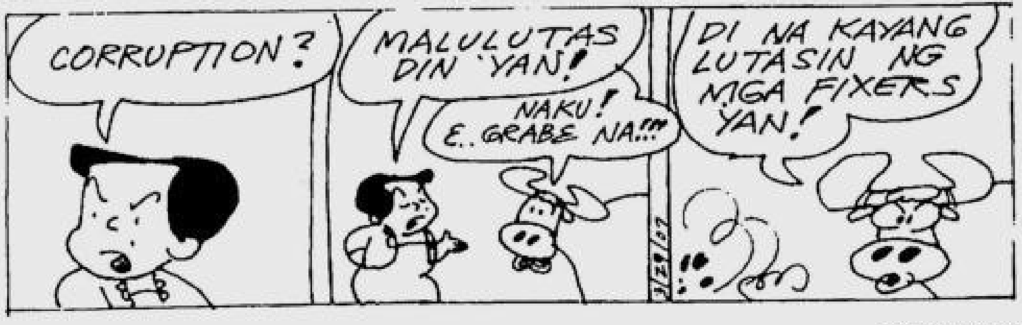
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I BET OL' MISS LILLIAN KNOWS WHAT YOU TWO DARLINGS WANT...HOMEMADE COOKIES!
THEY'LL BE DONE IN NO TIME!
...HOT AND FRESH OUT OF THE DISHWASHER
THUD
WHOOPSIE!
JIM DAVIS 3-29

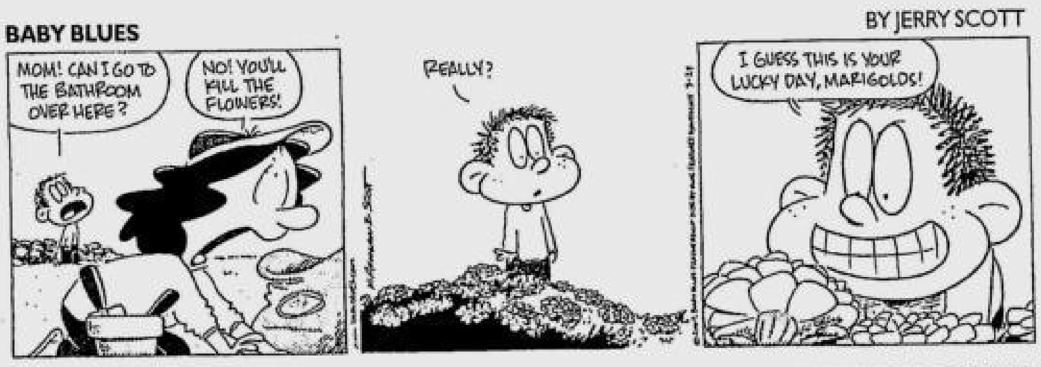
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


CORRUPTION?
MALULUTAS DIN 'YAN!
NAKU! E.. GRABE NA!!!
DI NA KAYANG LUTASIN NG MGA FIXERS YAN!
3/29/07

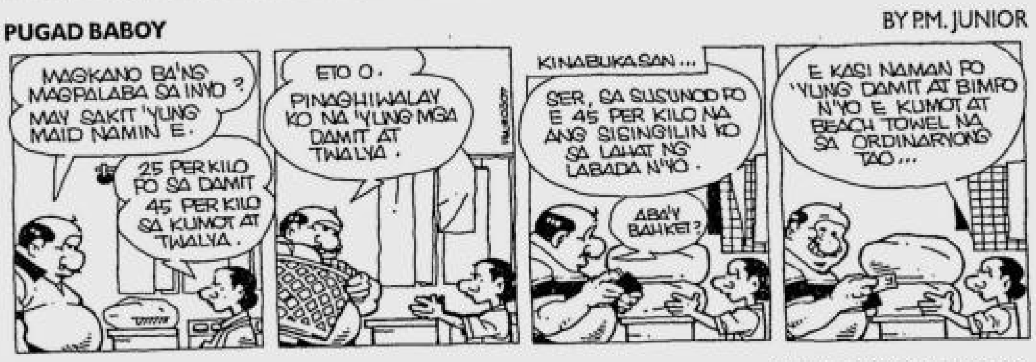
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


MOM! CAN I GO TO THE BATHROOM OVER HERE?
NO! YOU'LL KILL THE FLOWERS!
REALLY?
I GUESS THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY, MARIGOLDS!

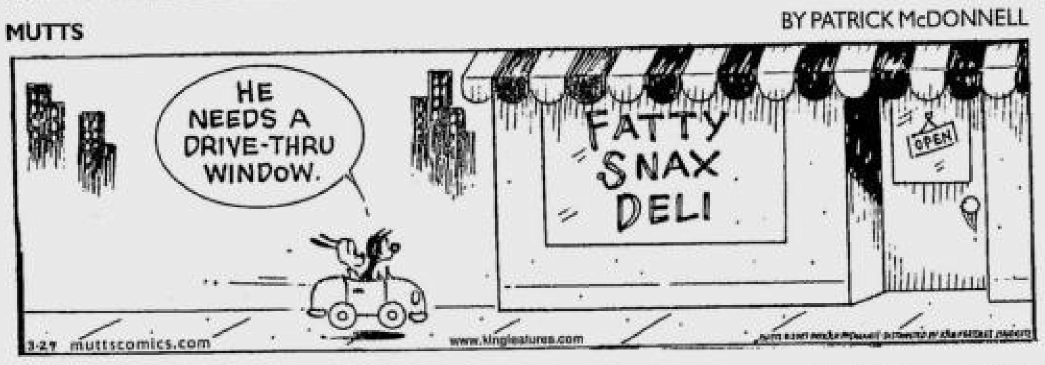
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAGKANO BA'NG MAGPALABA SA INYO? MAY SAKIT 'YUNG MAID NAMIN E.
25 PER KILO PO SA DAMIT 45 PER KILO SA KUMOT AT TWALYA.
ETO O. PINAGHIWALAY KO NA 'YUNG MGA DAMIT AT TWALYA.
KINABUKASAN...
SER, SA SUSUNOD PO E 45 PER KILO NA ANG SISINGILIN KO SA LAHAT NG LABADA N'YO.
ABA'Y BAHKET?
E KASI NAMAN PO 'YUNG DAMIT AT BIMPO N'YO E KUMOT AT BEACH TOWEL NA SA ORDINARYONG TAO...

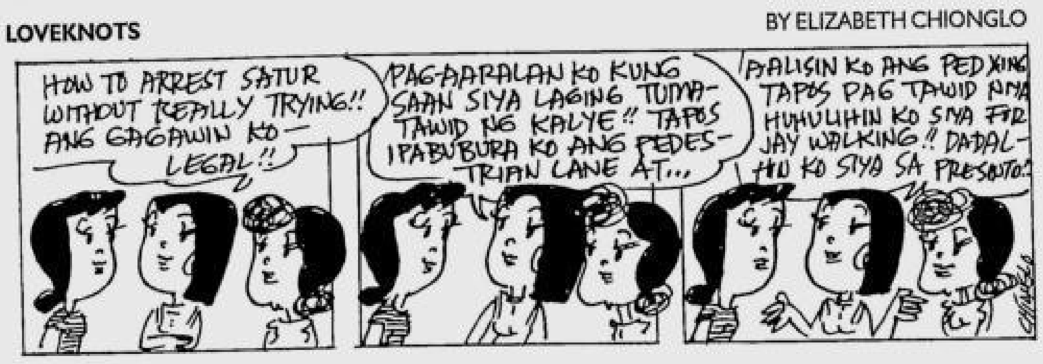
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HE NEEDS A DRIVE-THRU WINDOW.
FATTY SNAX DELI
OPEN
3-29 muttscomics.com
www.kingfeatures.com

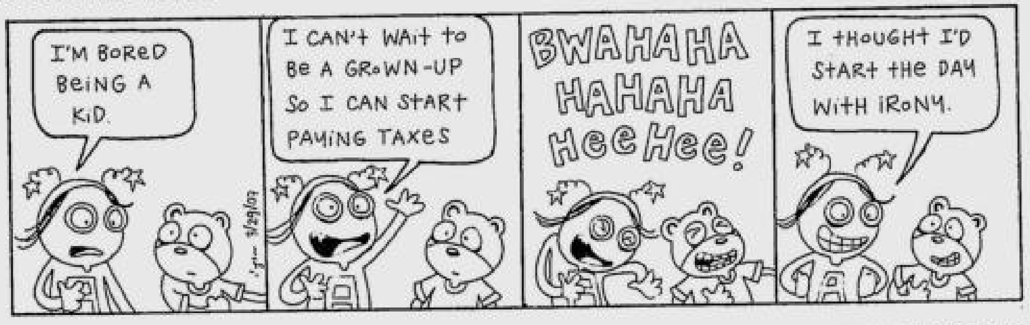
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HOW TO ARREST SATUR WITHOUT REALLY TRYING!! ANG GAGAWIN KO— LEGAL!!
PAG-AARALAN KO KUNG SAAN SIYA LAGING TUMATAWID NG KALYE!! TAPOS IPABUBURA KO ANG PEDESTRIAN LANE AT...
PALISIN KO ANG PEDXING TAPOS PAG TAWID NYA HUHULIHIN KO SIYA FOR JAY WALKING!! DADALHIN KO SIYA SA PRESINTO!

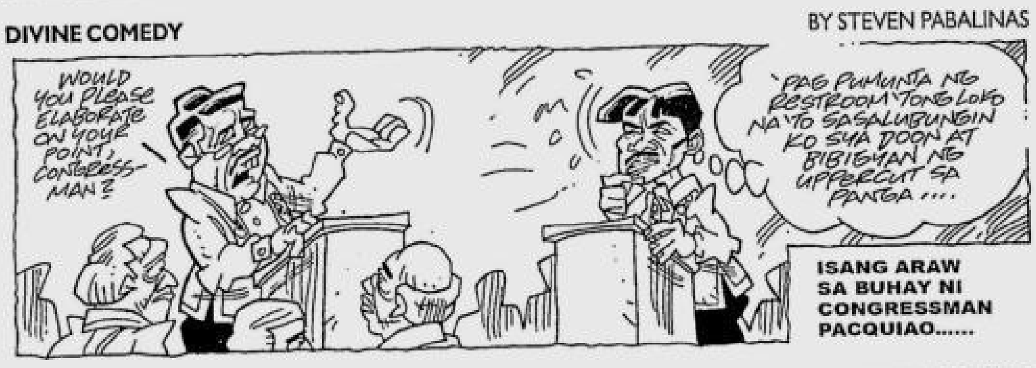
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


I'M BORED BEING A KID.
I CAN'T WAIT TO BE A GROWN-UP SO I CAN START PAYING TAXES
BWAHAHA HAHAHA HEEHEE!
I THOUGHT I'D START THE DAY WITH IRONY.

DIVINE COMEDY

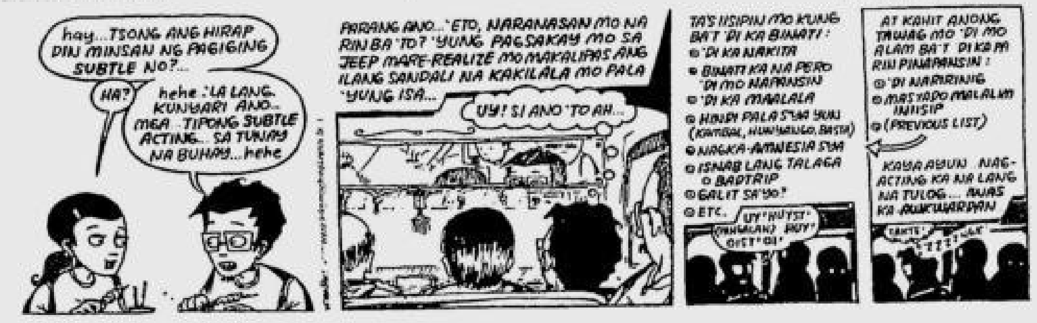
BY STEVEN PABALINAS


WOULD YOU PLEASE ELABORATE ON YOUR POINT, CONGRESSMAN?
'PAG PUMUNTA NG RESTROOM 'TONG LOKO NA'TO SASALUBUNGIN KO SIYA DOON AT BIBIGYAN NG UPPERCUT SA PANGA....

ISANG ARAW SA BUHAY NI CONGRESSMAN PACQUIAO......

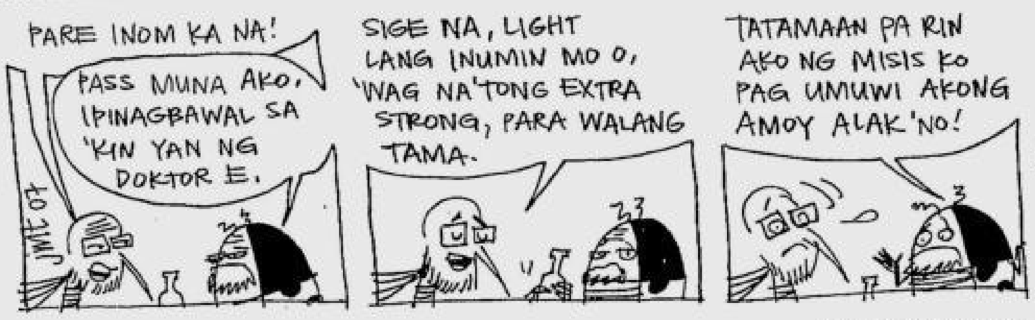
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hay...TSONG ANG HIRAP DIN MINSAN NG PAGIGING SUBTLE NO?...
HA?
hehe : LA LANG. KUNWARI ANO.. MGA.. TIPONG SUBTLE ACTING... SA TUNAY NA BUHAY...hehe
PARANG ANO...'ETO, NARANASAN MO NA RIN BA 'TO? 'YUNG PAGSAKAY MO SA JEEP MARE-REALIZE MO MAKALIPAS ANG ILANG SANDALI NA KAKILALA MO PALA 'YUNG ISA...
UY! SI ANO 'TO AH...
TA'S IISIPIN MO KUNG BAT' 'DI KA BINATI :
'DI KA NAKITA
BINATI KA NA PERO 'DI MO NAPANSIN
'DI KA MAALALA
HINDI PALA S'YA YUN (KAMBAL, HUWIWALO, BASTA)
NAGKA-AMNESIA S'YA
ISNAB LANG TALAGA
BADTRIP
GALIT SA'YO?
ETC.
AT KAHIT ANONG TAWAG MO 'DI MO ALAM BA'T 'DI KA PA RIN PINAPANSIN :
'DI NARIRINIG
MASYADO MALALIM INIISIP
(PREVIOUS LIST)
KAYA AYUN NAG-ACTING KA NA LANG NA TULOG... AWAS KA AWKWARDAN

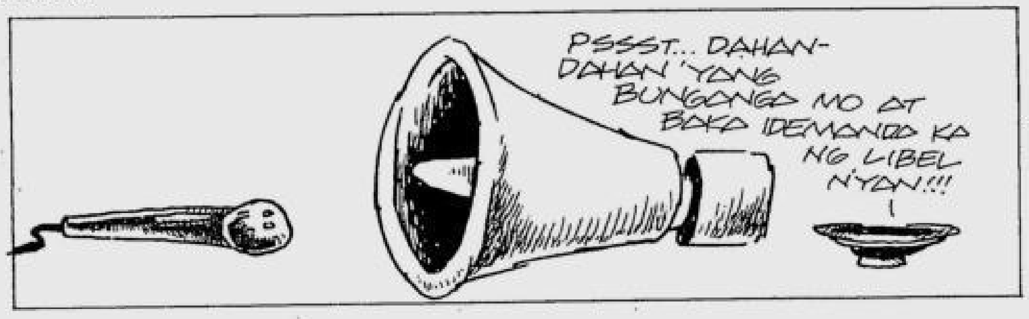
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


PARE INOM KA NA!
PASS MUNA AKO, IPINAGBAWAL SA 'KIN YAN NG DOKTOR E.
JIME '07
SIGE NA, LIGHT LANG INUMIN MO O, 'WAG NA 'TONG EXTRA STRONG, PARA WALANG TAMA.
TATAMAAN PA RIN AKO NG MISIS KO PAG UMUWI AKONG AMOY ALAK 'NO!

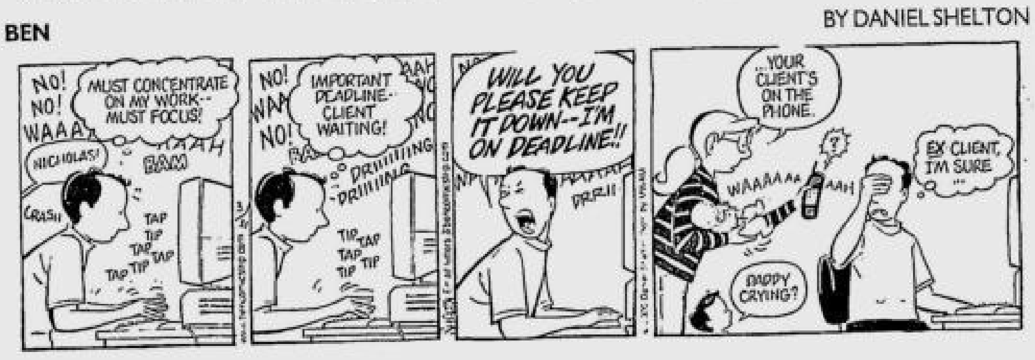
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

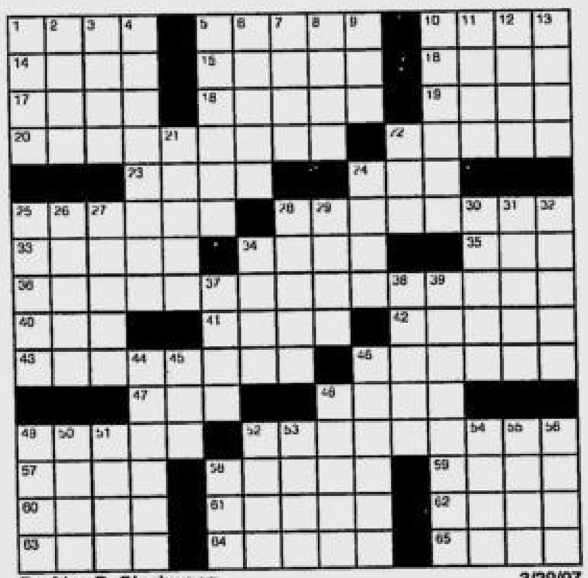

PSSST... DAHAN-DAHAN 'YONG BUNGANGA MO AT BAKA IDEMANDA KA NG LIBEL N'YAN!!!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


NO! NO! WAAA
MUST CONCENTRATE ON MY WORK-- MUST FOCUS!
NICHOLAS!
AAAH
BAM
CRASH
TAP TIP TAP TAP TIP TAP
NO! WAA NO!
IMPORTANT DEADLINE-- CLIENT WAITING!
DRIIIIING DRIIIING
TIP TAP TAP TIP TIP
WILL YOU PLEASE KEEP IT DOWN--I'M ON DEADLINE!!
AAAAAH
PRRII
...YOUR CLIENT'S ON THE PHONE.
WAAAAAA
AAH
EX CLIENT, I'M SURE ...
DADDY CRYING?

DAILY CROSSWORD


By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
3/29/07

ACROSS

1 Makes a choice
5 Collector's book
10 Silver-tongued
14 Dennis the Menace, for one
15 Scandinavian
16 Take the bus
17 Greek letter
18 Projecting bay window
19 Very long time
20 Start of Moliere quote
22 Early-stage seed
23 Unit of force
24 Take to court
25 Steeper?
28 Small underground growths
33 Vexed continually
34 Detergent
35 Mauna __ volcano
36 Part 2 of quote
40 Tokyo, once
41 Move very slowly
42 Archibald and Thurmond
43 Isolated
46 Isolated
47 Argon or neon
48 "__ Lang Syne"
49 Piece of paper
52 End of quote
57 Mown grass
58 Spy's garment?
59 Radames' beloved
60 With, in Paris
61 Eagle's nest
62 Cicatrix
63 Extremely
64 Interminably
65 Evening in Padua

DOWN

1 NYC theater award
2 B.C. or Ont.
3 London art gallery
4 Take no cards
5 Consecrate with oil
6 "SNL" producer Michaels
7 Ship's jail
8 Exploits
9 Comic Brooks
10 Mixture of pebbles
11 In __ of
12 False god
13 Nota __
21 Nijo Castle's location
22 On the market
24 Last year's frosh
25 Domesticates
26 Piano study
27 Man of fables
28 Philosopher Josiah
29 Solemn word
30 Make joyous
31 Drying cloth
32 Full of lip
34 Transmitted
37 Skewed view
38 Suburb of Harrisburg
39 Continent
44 NASA, for one
45 Common rodent
46 Skulked
48 One more time
49 Czech or Slovak
50 Be down with
51 Pitcher with a spout
52 Muffin topper
53 Golfer's shout
54 Common rodents
55 Hebrew month
56 __ avis
58 Half a dance?

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

M	A	L	I		A	N	A	S		R	A	R	E	E
A	G	A	S		G	I	G	I		E	L	E	N	A
M	O	N	A		A	M	E	S		P	I	P	E	R
B	U	C	K	E	T	B	R	I	G	A	D	E		
A	T	E		S	E	L			L	I	A	N	A	S
S	I	T	E	S		E	L	D	E	R		T	I	E
			M	E	S		E	R	A		P	E	R	T
	B	O	U	N	T	Y	H	U	N	T	E	R	S	
M	O	B	S		U	M	A		S	R	A			
O	A	S		S	P	A	R	E		A	L	E	R	T
P	R	E	S	T	O			F	E	M		A	E	R
		S	H	E	R	I	F	F	S	P	O	S	S	E
L	O	S	E	R		L	O	O	T		S	T	A	N
I	S	E	R	E		S	U	R	E		H	E	L	D
N	U	D	E	S		A	R	T	E		A	R	E	S

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3/28/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're very bright and intelligent. You have an ironic sense of humor, and often use your wit to make a point. You're a shrewd observer of the human condition. You're also very loyal to friends and family. You can be relentless about pursuing your goals. Expect a major change in your life this year, perhaps as significant as in 1998.
Birthdate of: Marina Sirtis, actress; Eric Idle, comedian/actor; Elle Macpherson, model/actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be patient with people this morning, because it's easy to lose your temper. This will gain you nothing. Late in the day, good times are yours for the asking! Have a party.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Avoid arguments with bosses and parents this morning. You'll be pleased that the resources of others are available to you late in the day, when you need them. (It's something to look forward to.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's easy to have disputes with others today, especially siblings and relatives. Don't even go there! This evening you'll have a completely new slant on things.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Arguments about money or possessions are likely this morning. Cool your jets. Later in the day, you can be extremely productive.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today the Moon is in your sign, opposing fiery Mars. This makes you irritable with partners and close friends, and vice versa. Focus instead on fun and romance this evening.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Do not react to co-workers today, even if you feel annoyed. You'll only regret it later. After all, you have to work with these people whether you like it or not.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Difficulties with friends will test your patience this morning. Hang in there, because you'll suddenly see new solutions to old problems later in the day.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Disputes with authority figures or even family members might take place this morning. Don't lose your cool. Demonstrate grace under pressure.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Even though you're annoyed with misunderstandings this morning, later in the day you're delighted to discover something new. You suddenly see a better way of understanding something.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might have to defend some kind of financial situation today. (You're definitely ready to do it.) New uses for old things will present themselves later.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Relations with partners and close friends are sticky today. You might want to hide. A friend is willing to sympathize with you later.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Because you want your way at work, you will not tolerate complaints or challenges from others. However, VIPs could enter the picture later in the day. (You might want to change your tune.)

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

		2					6	
8		7	2					
				5	9		3	8
		3					9	
		8		6		5		
	1					7		
2	7		6	3				
					2	3		1
	5					4		

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/29

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	8	4	1	9	5	7	6	2
1	7	6	2	3	8	4	9	5
5	9	2	6	4	7	3	1	8
9	3	8	7	5	6	2	4	1
7	2	1	9	8	4	5	3	6
4	6	5	3	2	1	9	8	7
8	5	9	4	6	2	1	7	3
6	4	7	5	1	3	8	2	9
2	1	3	8	7	9	6	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★

3/28

Partners for healthy . . .

From page D1

1½ tsp curry powder

650 g skinless chicken breast or thighs, cut into one-inch cubes

1 tbsp minced garlic

1 tbsp vegetable oil

3 c hot cooked white rice or Aromatic Brown Rice Pilaf

Combine first seven ingredients in a large bowl or zip-lock bag. Add chicken and marinate in the refrigerator 30 minutes.

In a medium pan, saute garlic in oil over medium-low heat until fragrant and light golden. Add in chicken pieces and all the marinade. Let it come to a boil.

Turn heat from medium to low and simmer for 12-15 minutes, until chicken is done and sauce has thickened. Serve over rice. Top with more cilantro leaves.

Serves four.

Aromatic Brown Rice Pilaf

2 tbsp vegetable oil

1 tbsp unsalted butter

1 cinnamon stick, or a pinch of ground cinnamon

2 whole cloves, or a pinch of ground cloves

¾ c minced onion

2 c uncooked brown rice

2 c water

2 c chicken broth

½ c seedless raisins

½ tsp salt

1 tbsp orange zest

AROMATIC Brown Rice Pilaf

¼ c toasted pistachio or cashews

Heat the oil and butter in a medium pan. Add onion and saute for five minutes until onion is translucent. Stir in the cinnamon and cloves until fragrant. Add in rice and mix to coat the grains.

Add the water, chicken broth, raisins, salt and orange zest. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cover tightly. Simmer for 30-45 minutes until all liquid has been absorbed. Remove from heat and let stand for 10 minutes. Uncover and fluff with a fork. Garnish with nuts before serving.

Shrimp, Cucumber and Mango Salad

Dressing:

3 tbsp cane vinegar (adjust to suit taste)

3 tbsp sugar

6 tbsp Dijon or regular mustard

6 tbsp light mayo

SHRIMP, Cucumber and Mango Salad

Mix all ingredients. Refrigerate. (Dressing will keep for up to two weeks.)

Salad:

4 medium cucumbers, cut into ½-inch cubes (2 c, more or less)

1 large or 2 medium mangoes, cubed

1 pound cooked shrimp

3 tbsp chopped fresh dill

Romaine lettuce

Salt, pepper

A few drops of hot sauce

To serve, mound the romaine lettuce on plates. Combine cucumbers, mangoes, shrimp and chopped dill. Toss with the dressing. Mound on top of lettuce leaves. Serve cold.

Serves four to six.

Pineapple Honey Dressing:

½ c honey

3 tbsp crushed pineapple

¼ c lemon juice

Salt

Pepper

Fruit Salad French Dressing: (Good on chopped watermelon, oranges, apples)

2 tbsp lemon juice

½ tsp salt

¼ tsp fresh ground pepper

½ c salad oil (soya or peanut)

1/3 c honey

Snow Peas with Ginger

1½ tsp sesame oil

3 c snow peas (*chicharo*)

1 tsp minced peeled fresh ginger

2 tbsp soy sauce

1/8 tsp freshly ground black pepper

Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium high heat. Add peas and ginger, saute three minutes or until peas are crisp tender. Remove from heat, stir in soy sauce and black pepper.

Makes four half-cup servings.

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P4,750 - APR 12 - 13 - Wedding cake assembly: Bake & decorate your own 2 tiered wedding cake using fancy borders, scrolls, strings & icing flowers
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CAKES, BREADS & COOKIES

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Using Lace Mats, New Rolling Pin W/ Designs, Swags & Ribbons, Non-Stick boards w/ Flowers & Veiners & Quilling NEXT SCHED: MAY 16

5. APR 20 // 8:30 AM - 1:00 PM - NEW CAKES - (P3,000)
Piña Colada, Tres Leches, Mocha Cake w/ egg white mocha icing, Chocolate Cherry Cake NEXT SCHED: MAY 18

6. APR 23 - 27 // 8:00AM - 5:00PM - BASIC COMMERCIAL BAKING - (P13,500. For whole course)
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P2,850 - APR 25 - Breads: pan de sal, dinner rolls, buns, pan de coco, ensaymada, honey bread & raisin bread
P2,950 - APR 26 - Pies: Buko pie, custard pie, pineapple pie, apple pie, mango pie.
P2,850 - APR 27 - Pastries & Cookies: almond tart, San Nicolas cookies, camachile, oatmeal cookies, lengua de gato, coconut macaroons.
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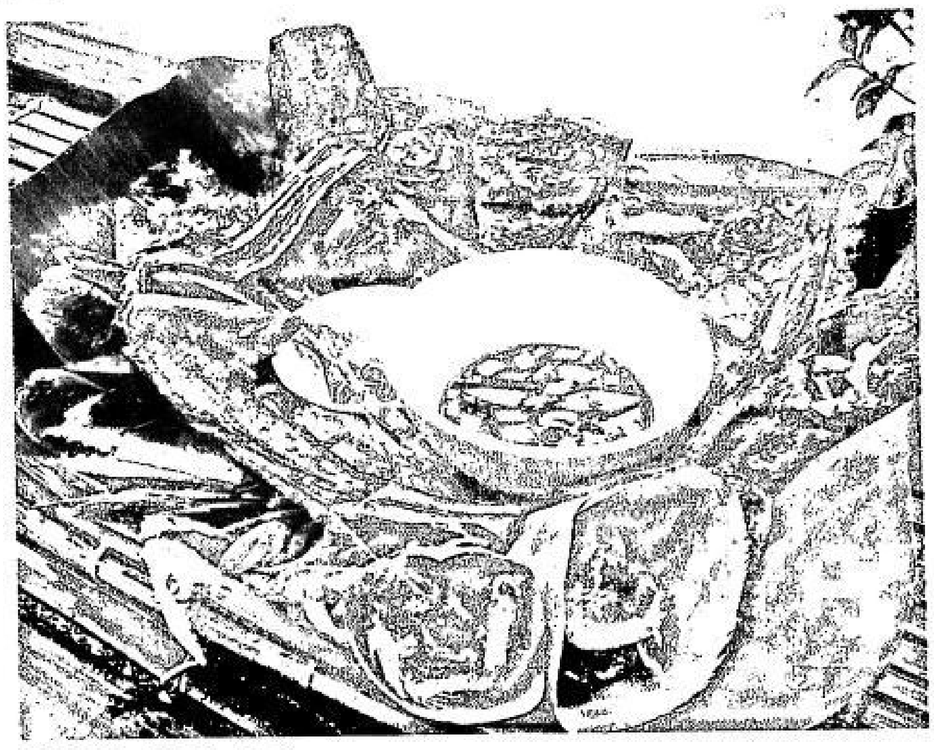


ISANG Bilao Fried Seafood

Stopover for seafood and fun

Text by Fran Katigbak
Photos by Remy Ramos

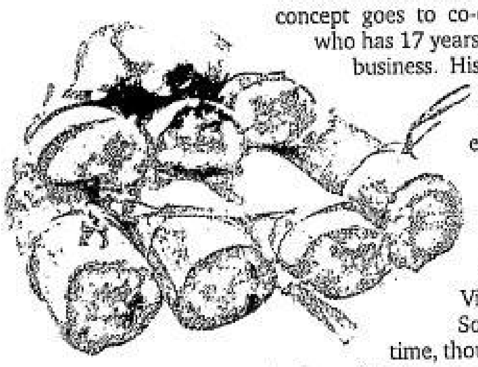
THE AGRICULTURAL TOWN of Gerona in Tarlac Province has been attracting travelers to stop over for fresh seafood and some much-needed R&R since restaurant and recreational park Isdaan, located along the national highway, opened in July last year.

"Guests are encouraged to stay and enjoy the restaurant's recreational activities before or after eating," says general manager Arnold Viola.

Credit for Isdaan's impressive design and concept goes to co-owner Rod Ongpauco, who has 17 years' experience in the food business. His mother, Sixta "Mama Chit" Ongpauco, founded the famous Barrio Fiesta chain of restaurant.

It is no coincidence that there are familiar elements in ambiance and menu at the restaurant-park, says Viola.

So expect the singing (this time, though, from so-called *sariling kayod* Freddie Aguilar and Elvis Presley impersonators), *kilo-kilo* food portions, grilled fare and, of course, the trademark *kare-kare* and crispy *pata*. The Ongpaucos and their business partners, after all, are the same people behind Singing Cooks and Waiters Atbp., Bento Box, Barrio Grill, World Topps, Kilo-Kilo Grill Atbp., and Bakahan at Manukan chain of restaurants.



INNAPOY

HUTS float on waters teeming with fish.

But while it borrows certain features from sister establishments, Isdaan is unique in overall theme and cuisine.

The *palaisdaan*-inspired compound, as the name suggests, is 70 percent covered in water gleaming with countless king fish, Japanese koi and *tilapia*.

Recreational activities range from the subtle and therapeutic to the wacky and fun. Kids can go on free bike and *tupa* (sheep) rides in several play areas. Quite famous is the Tacsiyapo Wall, where you can relieve some of that anger by throwing ceramic ware, even a clock or TV set, onto a wall while shouting *tacsiyapo* (bullsh*t).

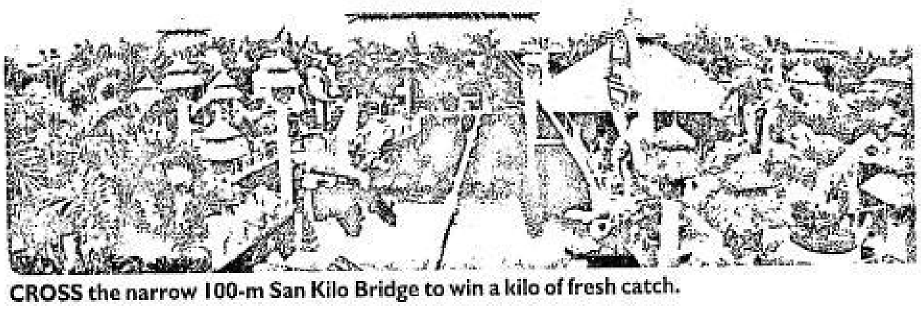
Not too typical

Viola says Isdaan serves Filipino food with a twist.

"Chicken, for example, is marinated in *gata* (coconut milk) before it is wrapped in banana leaves and grilled," he shares. "We also have *mga luto sa buho* (soup-based specialties cooked in bamboo tubes such as *sinigang*, *pinatola* and *kinalabasa* with choice of assorted seafood, beef or pork)."

Isdaan bestsellers include Pritong Bicol Bangus (fried milkfish with tomatoes, onions and a secret-recipe spicy filling); Ginataang Alimango sa Buko (*buho*-cooked crabs with *gata*); Isang Bilao Fried Seafood (assorted crispy-fried seafood); Lechong Tinupig Manok (grilled chicken marinated in *gata*); and appetizers Taksiyapong Balut (*balut* with vegetable slices cooked in spicy sauce) and Innapoy (rice rolls with *makang maanghang*, chicken curry and *longganisang* Pampanga filling).

E-mail the author at fkatigbak@inquirer.com.ph



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LIFESTYLE

COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

What's in a name?

THE FIRST TIME I HAD FISH *escabeche* in Leyte, my palate was shocked.

I should have been warned by how it looked, the fish taking on a more yellow tinge than the orange I was used to. It was so sour I asked if that was their *paksiw*.

I was told *paksiw* was different and the yellow color was from *dilaw* or turmeric.

That was something to add to my lists of "same-name-different-dish" and "same-dish-different-name." I had been doing that ever since I was told that the Tagalog *inihaw* was *sinugba* in the Visayas and, to my amazement then, the Visayan *ihaw* meant to slaughter.

My latest one was contributed by a cousin who had just arrived from Cebu to attend his twin brother's wedding. He looked at the bowl in front of him and asked me what he was served. I told him it was *guinataang halo-halo*.

He smiled as if remembering and said it's *binignit* in Cebu. He has lived in Cebu for seven years and forgotten how certain dishes and things are called in Tagalog.

It reminded me of my sister who giggled every time she remembered how the *bilo-bilo* (rice flour balls) in her *guinataan* was called *pinindot* in her husband's province, Batangas.

Little water, many names

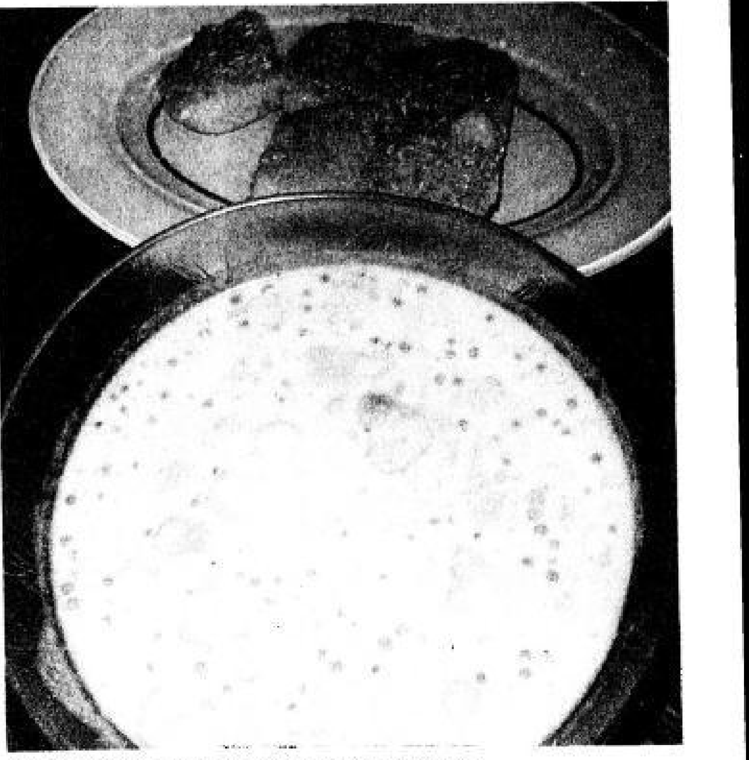
Cooking a medley of vegetables in a little water takes on different terms from north to south. It's *dinendeng* in Ilocos, *bulanglang* in the Tagalog region, *laswa* in Iloilo, *law-oy* in Cebu and *lawot-lawot* in Leyte.

While the vegetables might not be the same because of local preference and what is available, the quality will depend on when those vegetables are picked and how soon after that they are cooked.

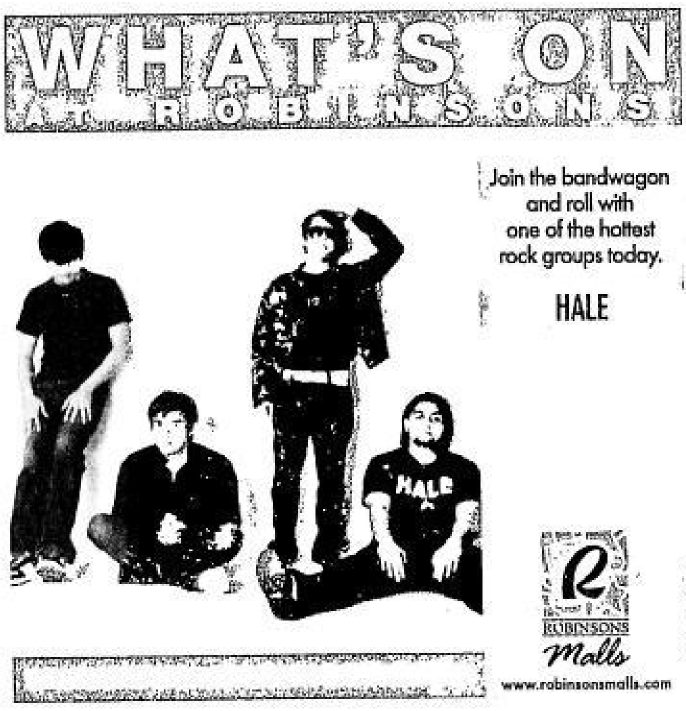
The boiling of the leg and kneecap of cow or carabao until a delectable broth is achieved and the tendons become almost gelatinous is done throughout the country. Most people know it as *bulalo*, which is how it's called in Batangas. When it's encountered in the south, it's *pakdol* in Leyte, *balbacoa* to Cebuanos and *kansi* to Ilonggos.

WHAT'S/ E3

One dish is called different things in different places so you can end up with a surprise dish



GUINATAANG halo-halo becomes *binignit* in Cebu.



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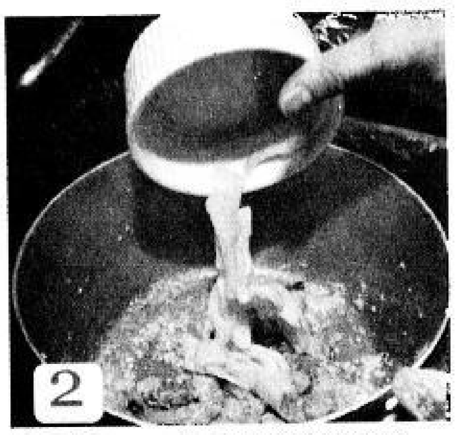
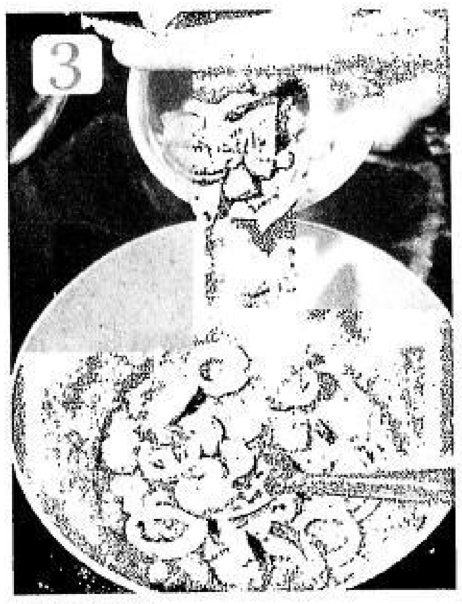
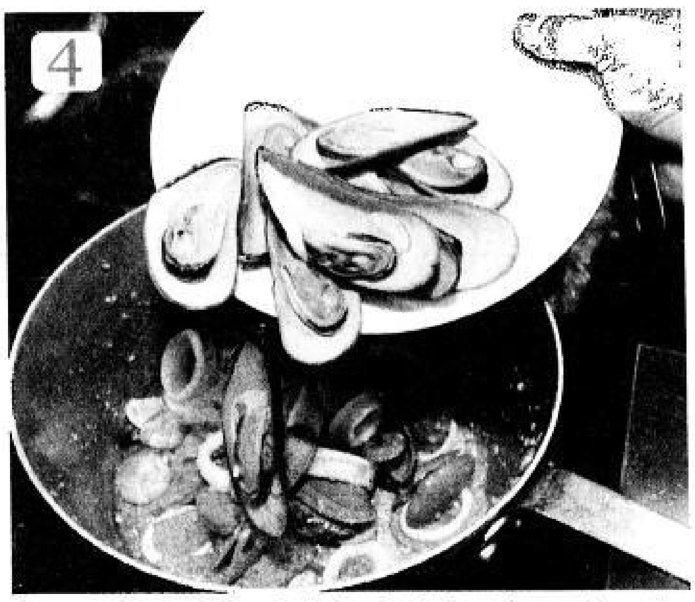


ADD shrimps and cook until pink in color, then stir in calamari.

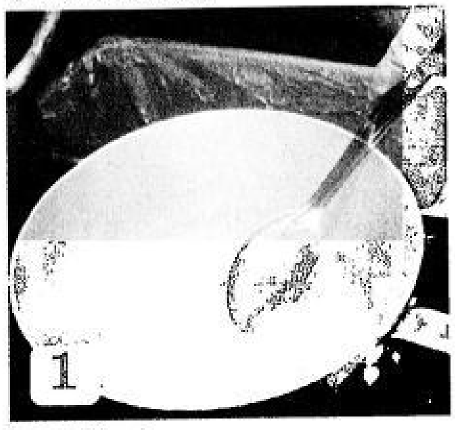


ADD sausage.



MIX in mussels and clams. Add *ulang*. Cook for a minute and transfer to a clean plate and set aside.

USING the same saucepan, heat oil.



HEAT oil in a heavy saucepan and sauté garlic until light brown in color.

Jambalaya, the American South's paella

STEP BY STEP

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Ryan Lim

LENT OR NOT, WHO CAN resist good seafood jambalaya? It is healthy, full of flavor, and a complete meal by itself.

Jambalaya is a Creole dish popular all over the American South. The versatile dish combines cooked rice with a variety of ingredients including tomatoes, onions, green peppers and almost any kind of meat, poultry or shellfish. It varies widely from cook to cook, restaurant to restaurant.

The version of Gumbo Restaurant is a merry mix of seafood—shrimps, calamari (squid), mussels and clams—with onions, green bell pepper. It is served topped with langoustine or *ulang* from Bulacan. *Andouille*, a French sausage, is mixed for that added kick.

"Jambalaya is perhaps the most popular dish the South has to offer," says Albert Alavera, managing director of Gumbo, which has branches at The Block, SM North Edsa, and the SM Mall of Asia. "It's like New Orleans' answer to Spain's paella."

Rice dish

He says American South cooks generally agree that jambalaya can be made from essentially anything in the kitchen as long as it contained rice, vegetables and Creole spices.

Like paella, risotto and other rice dishes, jambalaya involves sautéing vegetables and then adding rice and a cooking stock before simmering the mixture together.

Easy to make, jambalaya requires slow cooking. Alavera says jambalaya should be moist. It is best served and eaten right after it is cooked. The rice absorbs the moisture and jambalaya becomes a bit dry.

Generally, the seafood is cooked separately from the rice. It should not be overcooked.

The vegetables, uncooked rice, broth and seasonings are mixed together and simmered until the rice is done. Constant stirring is required in this recipe to make sure nothing sticks to the bottom.

The seafood is added when the rice is almost cooked.

Andouille sausages are available in Rustan's supermarkets or Santi's Deli shops. You can also use smoked Hungarian or Italian sausages. Simply sprinkle chili paprika on the sausage to add flavor.

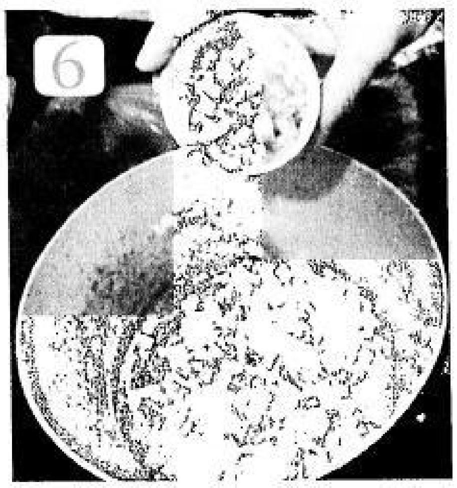
Authentic jambalaya requires a special Creole spice. But you can make your own spice mix by combining together chili paprika, oregano, basil, salt, pepper, dried parsley, garlic and onions. Cook this mixture on low to medium heat. Check the seasoning and adjust if necessary.

While the jambalaya is cooking, taste frequently and adjust seasonings. This recipe can be served as main dish for two to three people. Leftover jambalaya can be kept in the refrigerator for several days.

Ingredients

2 tbsp oil
1 tbsp garlic
10 pc shrimps, peeled, tails on
100 g calamari, sliced (½ inch)
100 g *andouille* sausage or any smoked sausage
10 pc mussels, ½ shell, blanched
10 pc clams, full shell, blanched
1 pc langoustine (*ulang*), blanched
1 tbsp oil
50 g white onion, chopped
30 g celery, chopped
30 g green bell pepper, chopped
1 c California rice, washed
2 c chicken stock
2 tbsp paprika
1 tsp special seasoning (a mix of chili, paprika, oregano, basil, salt, pepper, dried parsley, garlic, onions)

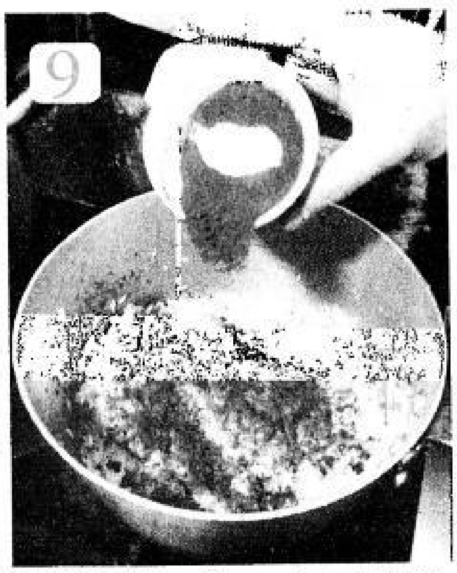
For suggestions, e-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph



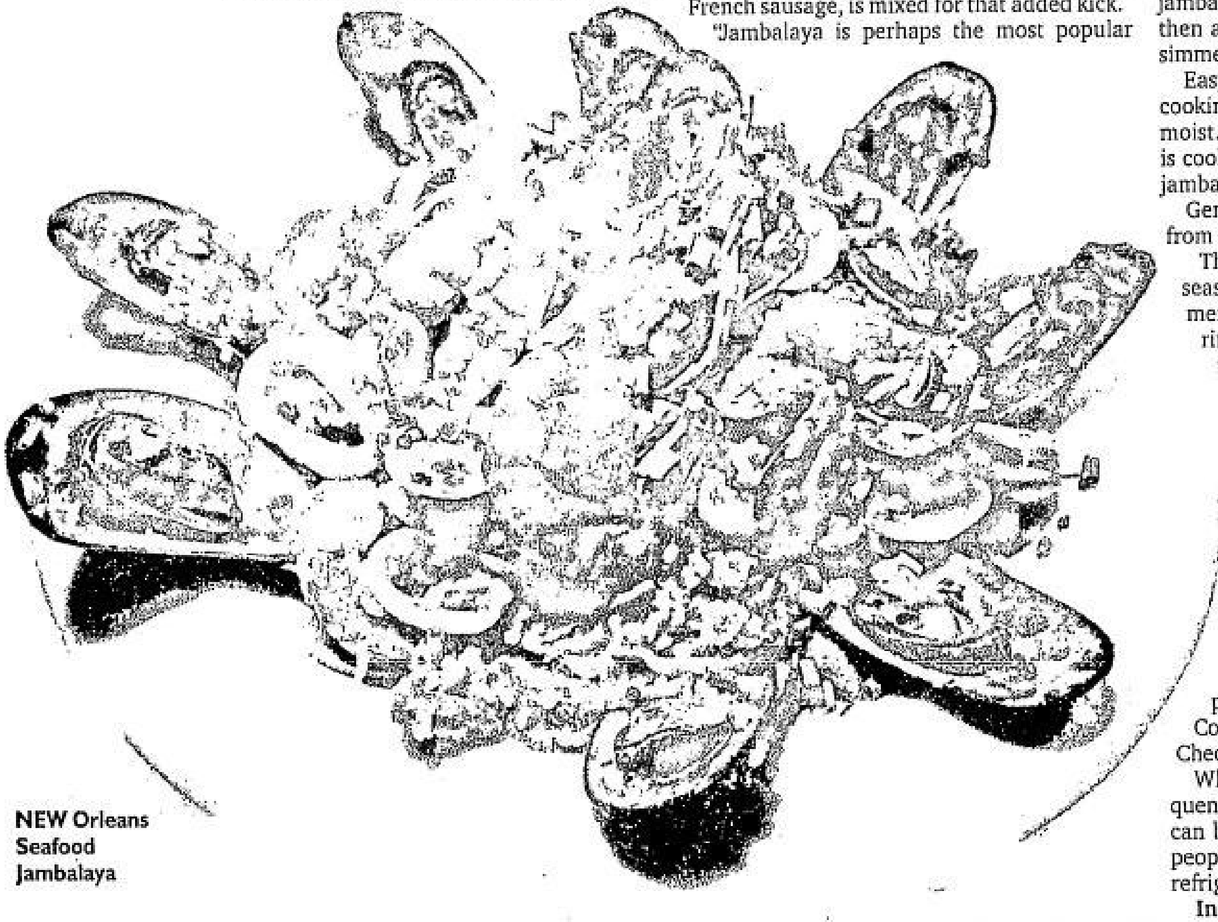
SAUTÉ onions, bell pepper and celery. Cook until tender, stirring continuously.

ADD washed rice. Mix well.

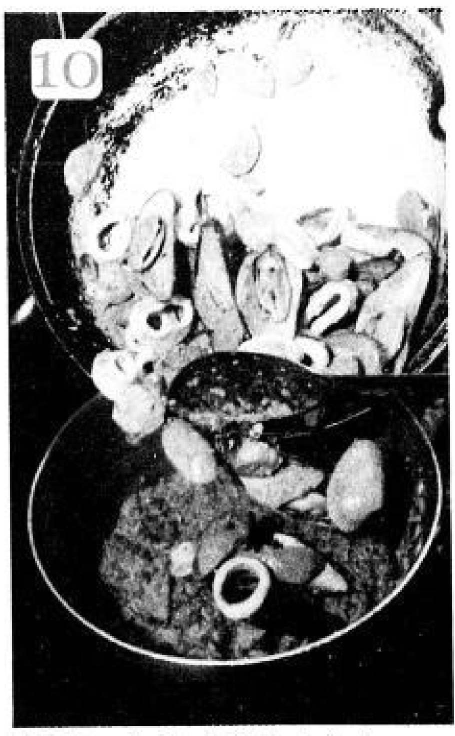
POUR chicken stock.



SEASON with special seasoning and paprika. Stir until well-mixed. Boil.



NEW Orleans Seafood Jambalaya



FOLD in seafood and stir. Cook rice to perfection.

TRANSFER jambalaya into a platter. Place *ulang* on top. Garnish with chopped green onions.

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What's in a name?

From page E1

Sometimes terms can be interchanged. Ground pork mixed with other ingredients then shaped into a roulade is *embutido* in most places, but Pampanga and Cagayan folks call that *morcon*. In other places, *morcon* is beef roulade with sausage, carrots and boiled egg within.

With or without noodles

Batchoy is usually associated with the Ilonggo specialty of pork with its innards sliced thinly, broth made rich with *guinamos* (*bagoong*) and *miki* (thin noodles) added in. In the Tagalog region, *batchoy* is minus the *miki*. The equivalent in the Ilocos is *yusi* to which *gamet* or dried seaweed is added.

The most unusual name I encountered was the version from Quezon called "Bombay." That's because the slices of pork are wrapped first in *saba* banana leaves done in a way that make them look like the turbans of Indian Sikhs (Filipinos call all Indians "Bombay"). The banana packets are later opened to release the pork pieces into the broth.

My Cebuana friend, who cooks a mean *ulo ng maya-maya sinigang* (sour soup of red snapper head), calls it *tinowa*. I thought that was the only different name I would encounter for this sour soup.

But in Leyte, I was told it is *tinola*. The name applied only to fish. Meat *sinigang* is called *lauya*. Of course, *tinola* in the northern part of the country is chicken soup boiled with ginger and sliced green papaya with *sili* (chili) leaves.

But Bicolanos have their own name, *cocido*. That made it all the more confusing because in most other places, *cocido* is the Spanish boiled dish of meat and vegetables—unless someone suggests that the name for that dish should really be *puchero*.

Confusing name

Another name that is also confusing is *picadillo*. In many places it's made of ground meat and potatoes but in Bicol it's a fish dish. The fish, mudfish or carp, is cut as for *daing* (from the head down to the tail, from the back) stuffed with garlic, onion, ginger, tomatoes and *kamias*, flavored with salt then wrapped in *pechay* or *gabi* leaves, boiled with coconut milk and chili added at the last moment.

Balao-balao in Angono, Rizal is fermented rice (*buro*) with fish. But in Pagsanjan, Laguna, it's fresh water shrimp (*yapyap*) cooked in coconut milk until all the liquid has evaporated.

Surprisingly, some names of *kakanin* (native cakes) aren't that different from region to region. *Suman sa ibos* and *suman lihiya* are called just that almost everywhere. Sometimes though, they are given nicknames.

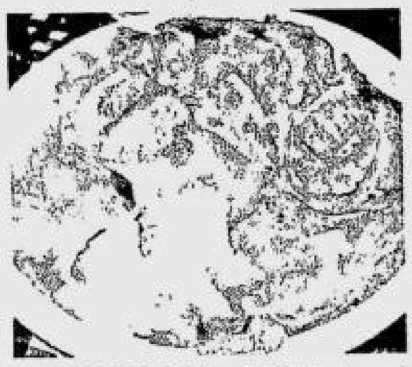
Suman lihiya, for instance, is also called *suman tamad* in Cavite because it's the easiest *suman* to do with only two major ingredients, glutinous rice (*malagkit*) and lye (*lihiya*) or sodium hydroxide.

ILONGGO *laswa*

In Batangas, the same *suman* is sometimes called *sumang magkayakap* because two pieces are always tied together. It's also called *sumang dapa* because, when the bind is cut, the two pieces fall down.

Bibingkang malagkit, glutinous rice cooked with *panocha* or sugar and coconut milk, is called *biko* in the Visayas. In Laguna, it's called *sinukmani*. When it's arranged in a *bilao*, the art of fixing is called *sinuklay*.

Perhaps you can add to my lists.


BATANGAS *bulalo* **is** *pakdol* **in Leyte and** *kansi* **in Iloilo.**

Return of the Beatles

Just in case you're planning to go on that "long winding road" to Laguna this Holy Week, Ma. Teresa Saldana Sanchez informs me that her restaurant, "The Beatles," has reopened in Pakil. She offers home-cooked buffet lunch on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

Shrimp, 'bacalao' cooking

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts offers the following classes:

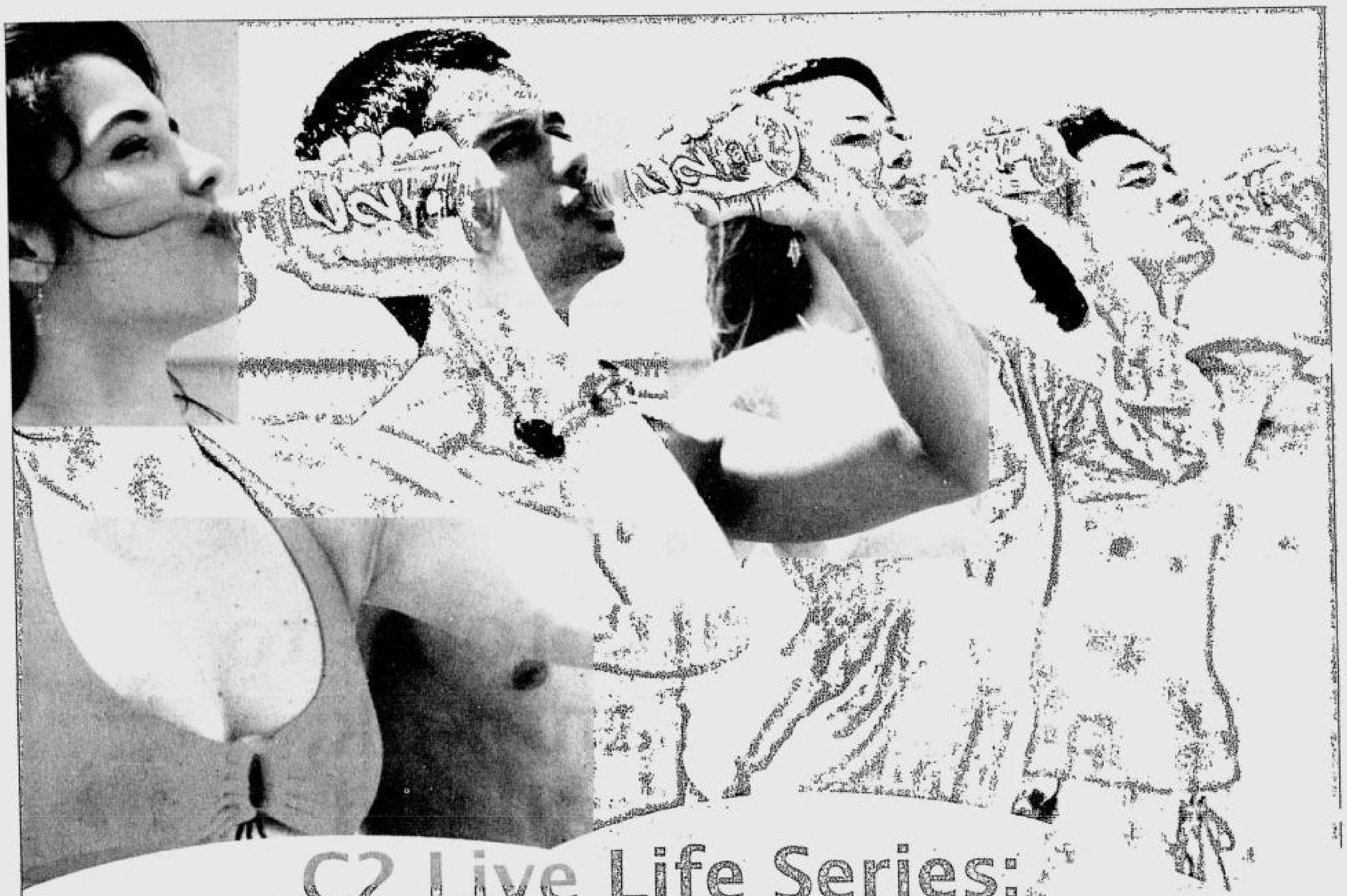
March 30: Shrimps '07—San Miguel Beer-steamed Suahe with Sauces; Deep-fried Whole Prawn Wrapped with Green Onion, Sesame; Shrimp Forcemeat; Shrimp Paste Sauteed Prawn; Chili Drunken Shrimp; sides.

April 2: Bacalao (all new)—Bacalao Paella; Two Delicious Traditional Spanish Recipes (Basque and Baby Olives); Variations: with Jamon, with Garlic Tomatoes, with Cilantro Pesto

April 9: Chops (all new)—Brined Pork Chops with Homemade Chutney; Brined Southern Pork Chops with Sweet Potatoes and Roasted Apples; Berry Lamb Chops with Green Risotto; Garlic Lamb Chops; Kona-crusted Lamb Chops; Country-style Fried Pork Chops with Fixins

April 11: Cooking with Cheese '07 (all new)—Melted Camembert with Condiments (elegant, a nice change from the usual Raclette); Brie-stuffed Chicken with Pear Chutney; Goat Cheese-stuffed Chops with Walnut Pasta; Lamb with Blue Cheese and Cassis Sauce; Salmon Macaroni and Cheese; Deep-fried Cheese with Fruit Relishes and Chutneys.

Kids, Beginners and Household Help cooking class schedules are out. Call 9289296 or 9273008.



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To kick off the C2 Summer Escapades, your favorite green tea drink will stage a send-off party at the Fuente Circle in Eastwood City on March 31, Saturday. This event will give guests a chance to win a trip to the island paradise of Boracay via Asian Spirit, or to any C2 Summer Escapades local beach destinations.

Every one is invited to the party. Just come in your hippest summer get-up and enjoy music from Drip and DJ Erwin Edralin, as well as fire-dancing performances, from 7pm onwards.

Or come earlier at 5pm and let C2 help you get a beach-ready body with the help of chef Michelle Dinglasan, nutritionist Nadine Tengco, and Fitness First.

An Institute of Culinary Education graduate, Dinglasan has cooked for New York city's elite at Chanterelle in Tribeca and Flavors catering firm. Now with her own catering business, she will conduct an interactive demo on healthy cooking. Tengco was one of the pioneers who brought the South Beach Diet to the Philippines. Being a US-certified nutritionist and weight management specialist, and with her knowledge of body chemistry, she personifies how choosing a healthy lifestyle improves one's life.

There are also other activities like free Euro-massages and physical check-ups courtesy of Borough Medical Center.

To join the raffle, simply purchase C2 Green Tea at the Live Life Series: Summer Escapades events: **Eastwood** (March 31); **Boracay** (April 5-7 and 13-14); **Cebu and Bohol** (April 6-7); **Davao, La Union, and Subic** (April 28-29); and **Puerto Galera** (April 28-30). The grand draw, where the winner gets a trip to **Palau,** will be on May 4 at Eastwood City.

Free Sun Cellular text broadcasts will also alert subscribers how they can get more raffle entries at venues where C2's Summer Escapades will strike next.

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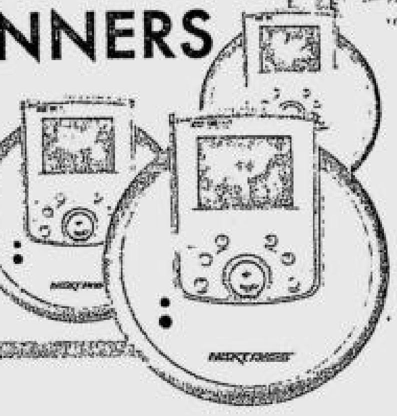

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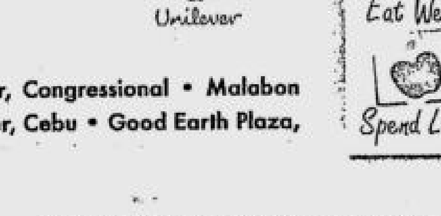

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Couldn't ask for more

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

GERALD ANDERSON couldn't ask for anything more as he turns 18. Less than a year in the biz, he and **Kim Chui** are already much sought-after endorsers.

They are the new models of Glamlab fragrances—goes well with the sweet smell of their success.

But foul intrigues are part of the package, unfortunately.

Talk circulated recently that Gerald and his manager **Jun Reyes** had a falling out because of money.

Gerald clarifies: "I'm co-managed by Tito Jun and Star Magic. I owe them a lot so I won't let anything come between us, especially not money problems. *Pera lang 'yun.*"

He spent some of his hard-earned money on his birthday celebration, which includes bringing goodies to cancer patients—which he intends to do yearly from now on. Kindness is a gift that Gerald was born with.

Wish list

Cristine Reyes is elated that she's on top of FHM's wish list on cover girls. "How flattering!" she says. "Too bad my mom won't allow it—maybe in due time. I'm not ready yet."

What about love? Is she ready for it after her thwarted romance with **Keempee de Leon** and **Mark Lapid**?

"Many guys ask me out but *wala pa akong* type."

Correct, girl! Collect, select and reject!

Family ad

Carmina Villaroel and her adorable twins Cassy and Mavy are lording it over TV ads.

The beaming mom says, "Zoren and I first ask the kids if they want to do a project. Then we ask for the story board and rehearse them at home. Good thing, director *ang* dad *nila* so *natuturuan sila mag*-project!"

She dreams of having an ad with Zoren in it, too, "*Para* complete *na ang* casting. Happy family!" What if her ex, **Rustom Padilla**, is directing the commercial? "No prob!" Carmina says. Oh yeah! Past is past. Work is work.

Go easy, mom

During a shooting lull, **Sarah Geronimo**'s co-stars coaxed her

COULDN'T/ F3

PBB castoffs cope

First 3 evicted housemates talk about their 15 minutes of fame

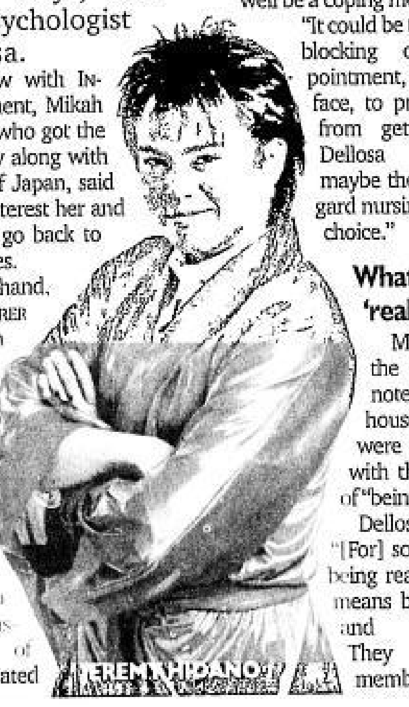
By Bayani San Diego Jr.

THE FIRST THREE evicted housemates on the ABS-CBN reality show "Pinoy Big Brother Season Two" are coping with expulsion in different ways, said resident psychologist Randy Dellosa.

In an interview with INQUIRER Entertainment, Mikah Dizon of Baguio, who got the boot last Saturday along with Jeremy Hidano of Japan, said show biz didn't interest her and that she'd rather go back to her Nursing studies.

On the other hand, Hidano told INQUIRER that he had "high hopes" for show biz and was planning to enroll in more acting workshops and try his luck as a voice talent.

Nursing school was also the priority of Jasmin Engracia of Davao, eliminated last Sunday. "I'm not really thinking of show biz, but if there are offers, I'll consider," she said.



JEREMY HIDANO

Dellosa, who held counseling sessions with the ousted trio as well as with the 13 remaining housemates, commented: "It's good that the three have backup plans." He pointed out, however, that the two girls' "ambivalent" attitude toward show biz could well be a coping mechanism.

"It could be their way of blocking out disappointment, to save face, to protect them from getting hurt," Dellosa said. "Or maybe they really regard nursing as a safer choice."

What is 'real'?

Meanwhile, the psychiatrist noted that the housemates were grappling with the definition of "being real."

Dellosa clarified: "[For] some of them, being real apparently means being tactless and insensitive. They should remember that, while they are free to express themselves, they should also be respectful and considerate of other people's feelings."

Mikah admitted, "I realized that I had two choices in the house—to be true to myself, or to blend in by pretending and changing my personality. I chose to be honest." She had no regrets, she said, even if, in the process, she alienated her housemates and some viewers. "I guess I'm too liberated for conservative Filipinos."

Jeremy was convinced he gave his best during his short stay. "Some thought I was being plastic. But I showed the real me—even my being a *totoy* (childish)."

Dellosa recounted that after Jeremy told Mikah and Maricris Dizon (of Italy) that he didn't mind being teased with another boy (Ezekiel Dimaguila of Australia), he complained about it to Big Brother.

"[Maybe] he just didn't want to offend the two girls," Dellosa said. "It's a balancing act."

PBB/ F3

JASMIN ENGRACIA

MIKAH DIZON

RUSHES

KIM FLORES

Preparation for the future

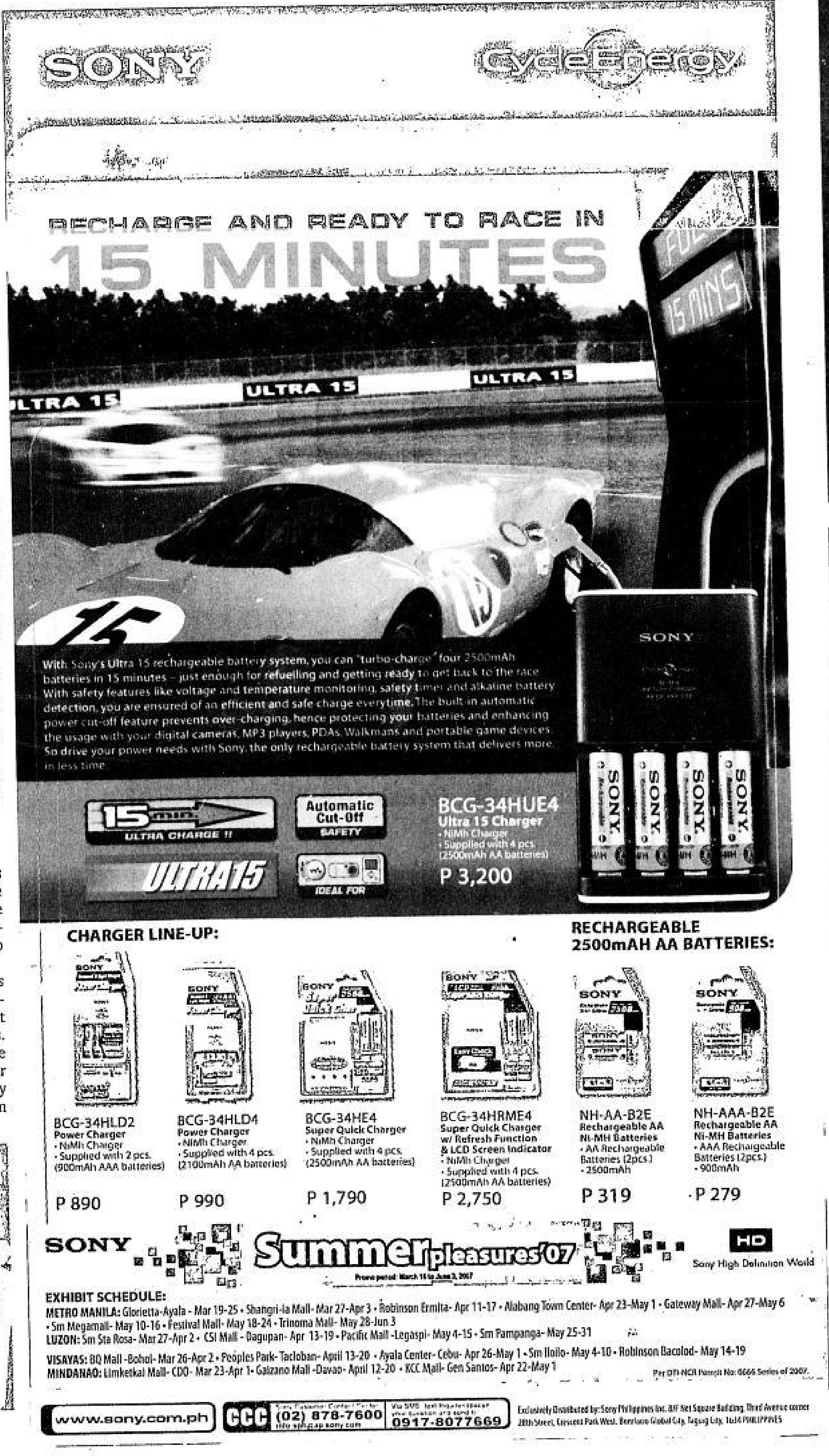
SINGER KIM FLORES is graduating from the Southville International School in Las Piñas City. She is among the top 100 in the high school batch, and recipient of an SIS college scholarship.

She won five golds in last year's World Championships for the Performing Arts, but Kim never thought of putting her studies on hold. "Show biz is not forever," she says.

Endorsers

- Makisig Morales is the new image model for Moose Gear. He wears several shirts at a time, "to look a little stouter."
- Isabel Oli has just renewed her endorsement contract with Flywear shades. Dark glasses are more than accessories for her: "They actually protect my eyes from the sun."

ISABEL OLI



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NORBIT PG13 1:30,3:40, 5:50,8:00	**THE GROOMSMEN - R13** 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15,10:25	**ROCKY BALBOA - PG13** 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10,10:30

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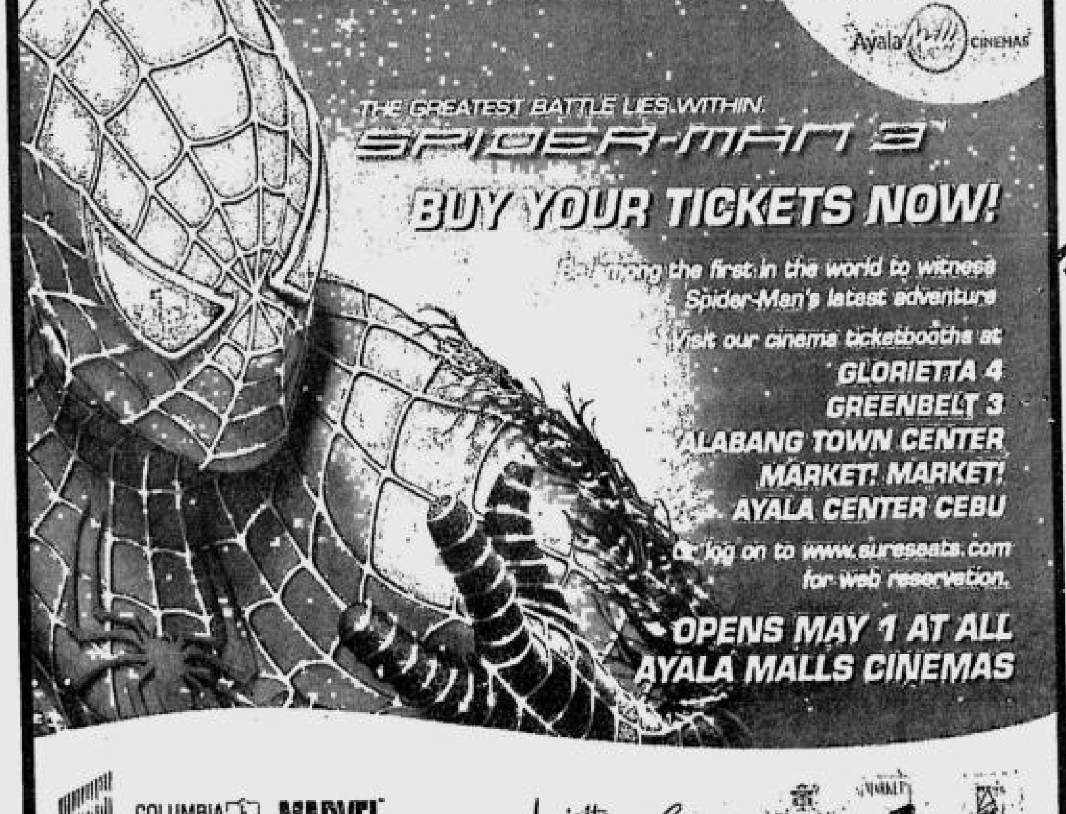

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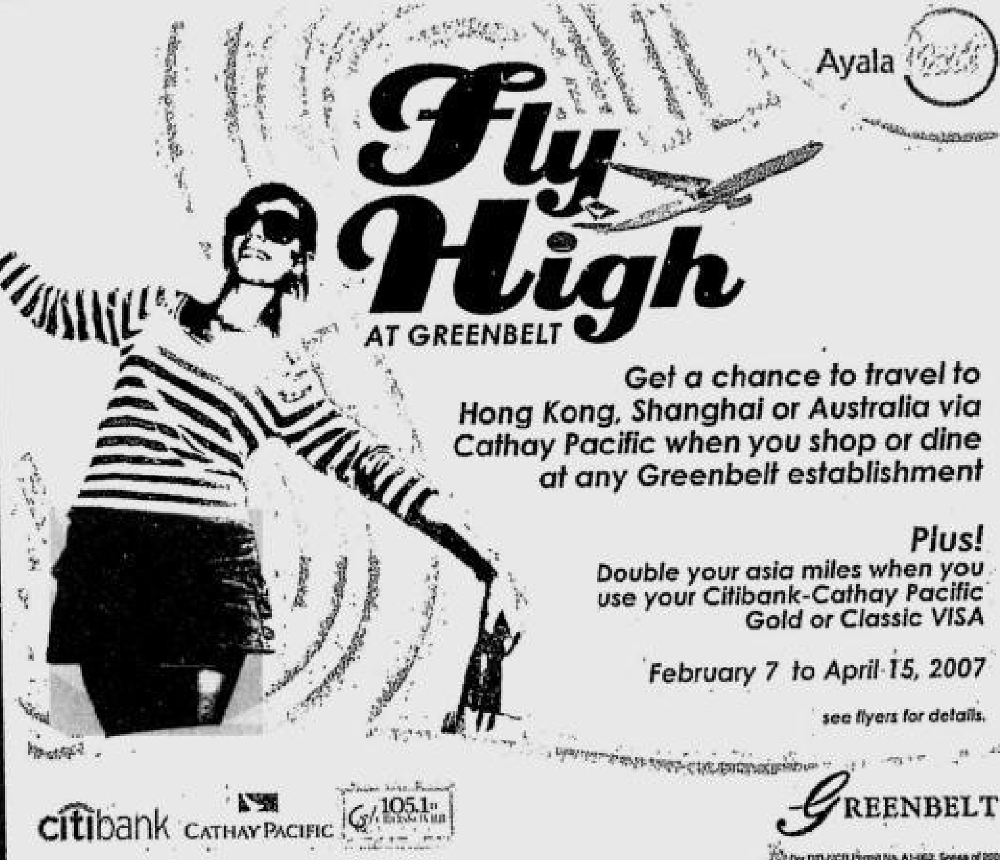

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WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning Mar 23

TMNT - Warner Bros. Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	TMNT	$25.4 mln	1
2	1	300	$20.5 mln	3
3	☆	Shooter	$14.5 mln	1
4	2	Wild Hogs	$14.4 mln	4
5	☆	The Last Mimzy	$10.2 mln	1
6	3	Premonition	$10.1 mln	2
7	☆	The Hills Have Eyes 2	$10.0 mln	1
8	☆	Reign Over Me	$8.0 mln	1
8	☆	Pride	$4.0 mln	1
10	4	Dead Silence	$3.5 mln	2

This Week, Last Week — *Weeks in Release*
☆ *New release*
Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday
REUTERS

Couldn't ask for more

From page F1

to jam with them in a sing-along booth. She was game but her mom said she should conserve her voice for a show the next day. That's a valid point, but mom should go easy on Sarah sometimes and let her have some fun.

Off to Japan

Rudy Fernandez proves he's made of sterner stuff as he battles the Big C. Aside from regular chemotherapy, Daboy will undergo radio-frequency ablation in Tokyo. Not too long ago—after his harrowing experience at Narita Airport with **Alma Moreno**—he vowed never to set foot there again. Hopefully, Japan's medical experts will be kinder to him than its airport authorities.

'EriKyla' tomorrow

Catch **Kyla** and **Erik Santos** together onstage for the first time in "EriKyla" tomorrow at Metro Bar on West Avenue, Quezon City. Since both are singing contests champs, expect show-stoppers galore.

Time to court

Kris Bernal and **Mart Escudero** are "Starstruck's" Ultimate Loveteam. What happens now to **Aljur Abrenica's** (Ultimate Hunk) plan to formally court Kris? Aljur has been very vocal about his feelings. Kris seemed to enjoy being torn between the two guys during the elimination round. As my gay friend put it, "Feel *na* feel *naman ni* Kris *na pinag-aagawan siya.*" We say to Kris: Don't let this divert your attention from the goal of the contest. Some "Starstruck" contenders make the contest seem like a BF/GF search more than anything.

For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com

PBB . . .

From page F1

Rigid doesn't work

Usually, the counselor added, conflict occurs when a housemate is too rigid. "Notice that those who've left are too straightforward."

Jasmin blamed the language barrier for her bad rep among housemates. "I speak Visayan and Chavacano well. [But] when I talked to them in Tagalog, my intonation made me sound harsh."

Plus, Dellosa said, "Jasmin's take-charge attitude was interpreted by the others as bossiness. She tried to adjust, but time ran out."

Time can likewise go against five other housemates nominated for eviction—Ezekiel, Dionne Monsanto of Cebu, Gee-Ann Abrahan of Quezon City, Wendy Valdez of Navotas and Maria Beatriz Saw of Bicol.

Eviction night is tentatively set this weekend (there is talk that one of the earlier evictees—Jeremy—may stage a comeback).

"But with Big Brother," Dellosa said, "it's still anybody's guess."

Last call for Taiwan fest

FILM ENTHUSIASTS HAVE only until today to catch the featured movies in the Taiwan Film Festival at the William Shaw Little Theater, De La Salle University, Manila.

To be screened today at the fest, presented by Team Communication and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, are "Let It Be" (11 a.m. to 12 noon), "Small Station" (2 to 3 p.m.) and "Chocolate Rap" (3 to 5 p.m.).

Admission is free. Call 887-6688.

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CINEMA 2 PREMONITION PG-13
12:10, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:15

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CINEMA 3 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER - GP
11:45, 2:05, 4:20, 6:35, 9:00

CINEMA 4 ROCKY BALBOA PG-13
10:30, 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10

CINEMA 5 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES - GP
10:40, 12:55, 3:10, 5:25, 7:40, 10:00

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

March 30, 2007	[illegible]	8:30 PM
Apr 13, 14 & 20, 21	Rock The Vote	8:00 PM
May 4, 2007	Hale	8:00 PM
May 18, 2007	Christian Bautista	8:00 PM

TEATRINO
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HAPPILY N' EVER AFTER 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00
THE CHANTING 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40
TEEN-AGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 1:20 / 3:20 / 5:20 / 7:20 / 9:30
NORBIT 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40
THE GROOMSMEN 12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
300 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
PATHFINDER 1:00 / 5:20 / 9:40
TURISTAS 3:10 / 7:30
PREMONITION 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00
ROCKY BALBOA 1:30 / 4:00 / 6:30 / 9:00

Gateway Platinum Cinema

Ali MALL 5

1 TEEN-AGE-MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:20 / 6:20 / 8:20
2 HAPPILY N' EVER AFTER 1:20 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 8:20
3 ROCKY BALBOA 12:40 / 3:10 / 5:40 / 8:10
4 THE CHANTING 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35
5 300 12:30 / 3:10 / 5:50 / 8:30

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For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

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Mar 30, Fri. 4:35 - Welcoat vs Air 21 7:20 - Ginebra vs Talk N Text

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SHALOM April 5 & 6, 1pm - 9pm
April 7, 4pm - 12mn

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2 PREMONITION
3 300
4 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
5 ROCKY BALBOA
6 THE CHANTING
7 THE GROOMSMEN
8 indieSine: THE QUEER CINEMA OF CRIS PABLO
9 NORBIT
10 TURISTAS

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4 THE CHANTING
5 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
6 NORBIT
300
7 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER

METRO EAST Ticket Price P100 682-8193 / 682-8199
1 THE CHANTING
2 ROCKY BALBOA
3 HAPPILY NEVER AFTER
4 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
5 ZOMBIES
6 300
7 NORBIT
8 PREMONITION

NOVALICHES [illegible] 935-3231 / 935-3229-30
1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 TURISTAS
3 300
4 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES
5 THE CHANTING
6 PATHFINDER

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4 THE CHANTING

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See Posters for more details
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Tickets are available starting March 22 until April 15 at the ticket booth

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3 BRIDGE to TERABITHIA
4 300
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

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2 BECAUSE I SAID SO
3 PATHFINDER
4 ALPHA DOG
5 HAPPY HEARTS

DASMARIÑAS Ticket Price P75 / 80 (046) 416-4332
1 300
2 TURISTAS
3 ALPHA DOG
4 THE HITCHER
5 SIQUIJOR

ANGELES Ticket Price P90 (045) 892-2348
1 PATHFINDER
2 SIQUIJOR
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 DREAMGIRLS

IMUS Ticket Price P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
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2 300
3 ZOMBIES
4 SIQUIJOR
5 THE CHANTING
6 ALPHA DOG

STARMILLS Ticket Price P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927
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2 ALPHA DOG
3 SIQUIJOR
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
5 DREAMGIRLS
6 300

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2 RESERVE
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4 DEAD PEOPLE 2
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 ROME and JULIET

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MTRCB Rating: PG-13

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3 PREMONITION
4 THE CHANTING
5 THE GROOMSMEN
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2 HULING ARAW NG LINGGO
3 TURISTAS
4 300
5 PREMONITION
6 NORBIT
7 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
8 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
9 THE CHANTING
10 HAPPY HEARTS
11 ROCKY BALBOA
12 BECAUSE I SAID SO

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
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2 TURISTAS
3 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
4 300
5 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
6 PREMONITION
7 THE CHANTING
8 ROCKY BALBOA
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 NORBIT
11 PATHFINDER
12 HULING ARAW NG LINGGO

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
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2 PREMONITION
3 ZOMBIES
4 ROCKY BALBOA
5 TURISTAS
6 NORBIT
7 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
8 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
9 300
10 THE CHANTING
11 PATHFINDER
12 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 300
2 NORBIT
3 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
4 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
5 ROCKY BALBOA
6 ZOMBIES
7 PREMONITION
8 HAPPY HEARTS
9 THE CHANTING
10 TURISTAS

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 300
2 ROCKY BALBOA
3 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
4 THE CHANTING
5 NORBIT
6 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
3 300
4 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLI
5 THE GROOMSMEN
6 NORBIT
7 PREMONITION
8 THE CHANTING
9 HULING ARAW NG LINGGO

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 PREMONITION
2 ROCKY BALBOA
3 THE CHANTING
4 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 ROCKY BALBOA
2 THE CHANTING
3 PREMONITION
4 PATHFINDER
5 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
6 300
7 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
8 NORBIT
9 HAPPY HEARTS
10 MONAY NI MR. SHOOLI
11 ZOMBIES
12 THE GROOMSMEN

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323301-04
1 THE HITCHER
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 NUMBER 23
4 TURISTAS

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
2 300
3 ROCKY BALBOA
4 ZOMBIES

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4 PREMONITION

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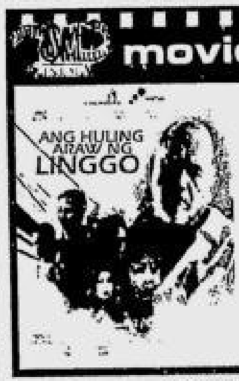

ANG HULING ARAW NG LINGGO

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6 HAPPY HEARTS
7 NORBIT
8 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 PATHFINDER
2 300
3 NUMBER 23
4 GOOD SHEPHERD
5 HAPPY HEARTS
6 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
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2 MUSIC AND LYRICS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

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2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 THE HITCHER

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85
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3 THE NATIVITY
4 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
5 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
6 HAPPY HEARTS

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
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2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 THE GOOD SHEPHERD

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 300
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 EPIC MOVIE

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
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2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
3 NUMBER 23
4 DREAMGIRLS

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
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2 HAPPY N'EVER AFTER
3 ZOMBIES
4 SIQUIJOR

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2 SIQUIJOR
3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 ROCKY BALBOA

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1 THE FOUNTAIN
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 SIQUIJOR
4 NUMBER 23
5 300
6 DREAMGIRLS

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
2 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
3 BECAUSE I SAID SO
4 300

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 300
3 SIQUIJOR
4 BECAUSE I SAID SO
5 EPIC MOVIE
6 DREAMGIRLS
7 RESERVED
8 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 RESERVED
2 GHOST RIDER
3 PATHFINDER
4 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLE
5 300
6 TENACIOUS D
7 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA
8 NUMBER 23

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
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3 THE GOOD SHEPHERD
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

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1 300
2 PREMONITION
3 NORBIT
4 TURISTAS

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3 PREMONITION
4 MONAY NI SHOLI
5 RESRVED

metropolis star
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(ALABANG) tel. 8504288, 5433994
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 TURISTAS
4 300

THEATRES
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

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(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 ZOMBIES
2 APHA DOG
3 TURISTAS
4 PATHFINDER
5 PREMONITION
6 300
7 NORBIT
8 BECAUSE I SAID SO
9 MONAY NI SHOOLI
10 HAPPY HEARTS

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 300
2 TURISTAS
3 PREMONITION
"PACQUIAO VS' SOLIS" APRIL 15, 2007

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 PATHFINDER
2 TURISTAS
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 300
5 PREMONITION

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PATHFINDER
3 YOU GOT ME
4 ASK THE DUSK

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 ZOMBIES
3 ALPHA DOG

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 300
2 MUSIC & LYRICS

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 NUMBER 23
2 MONAY NI SHOOLI
3 IT'S A BOY GIRL THING
4 HAPPY HEARTS

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 BRIDGE TO TERABITHIA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 PREMONITION
2 300
3 NORBIT
4 TURISTAS

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 300
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 THE HITCHER

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 HAPPY HEARTS
2 NUMBER 23
3 GHOST RIDER
4 PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 300
2 HAPPY HEARTS
3 FLUSHED AWAY

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 DEAD PEOPLE - 2
2 HAPPY HEARTS

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 PEEP SHOW

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 THE HITCHER
2 SHE WALK BY NIGHT
3 NAGBABAGANG LANGIT
4 MONAY NI SHOLI

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 DEAD PEOPLE-2
2 HUNGER FOR LOVE
3 MONAY NI SHOLI
4 FIRST TIME
5 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 MONAY NI SHOOLI
2 DEAD PEOPLE-2
3 HAPPY HEARTS
4 EPIC MOVIE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 MONAY NI SHOLI
2 OBSESSION

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

THEY'RE 10!
The world famous Teletubbies (from left) Tinky-Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa and Po pose on the balcony at Grand Central Station in New York on Monday. It's their first time on American soil, and will be in the city the whole week for a number of events to mark their 10th year. AFP

MTRCB PG-13

EDDIE MURPHY EDDIE MURPHY

Have you ever made a really big mistake?

NORBIT

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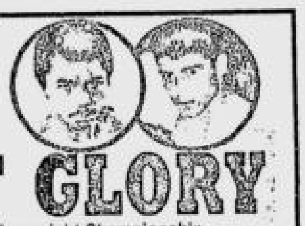

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MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 **300**
2:45, 5:35, 8:25, 11:10
R-13

2 **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES**
2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 10:55
G

3 **ROCKY BALBOA**
1:10, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
PG-13

4 **PREMONITION**
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
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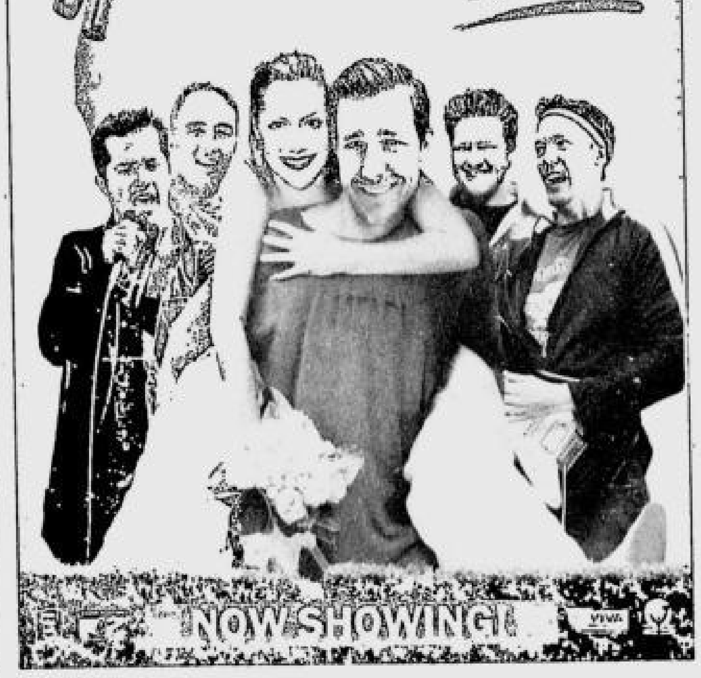

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